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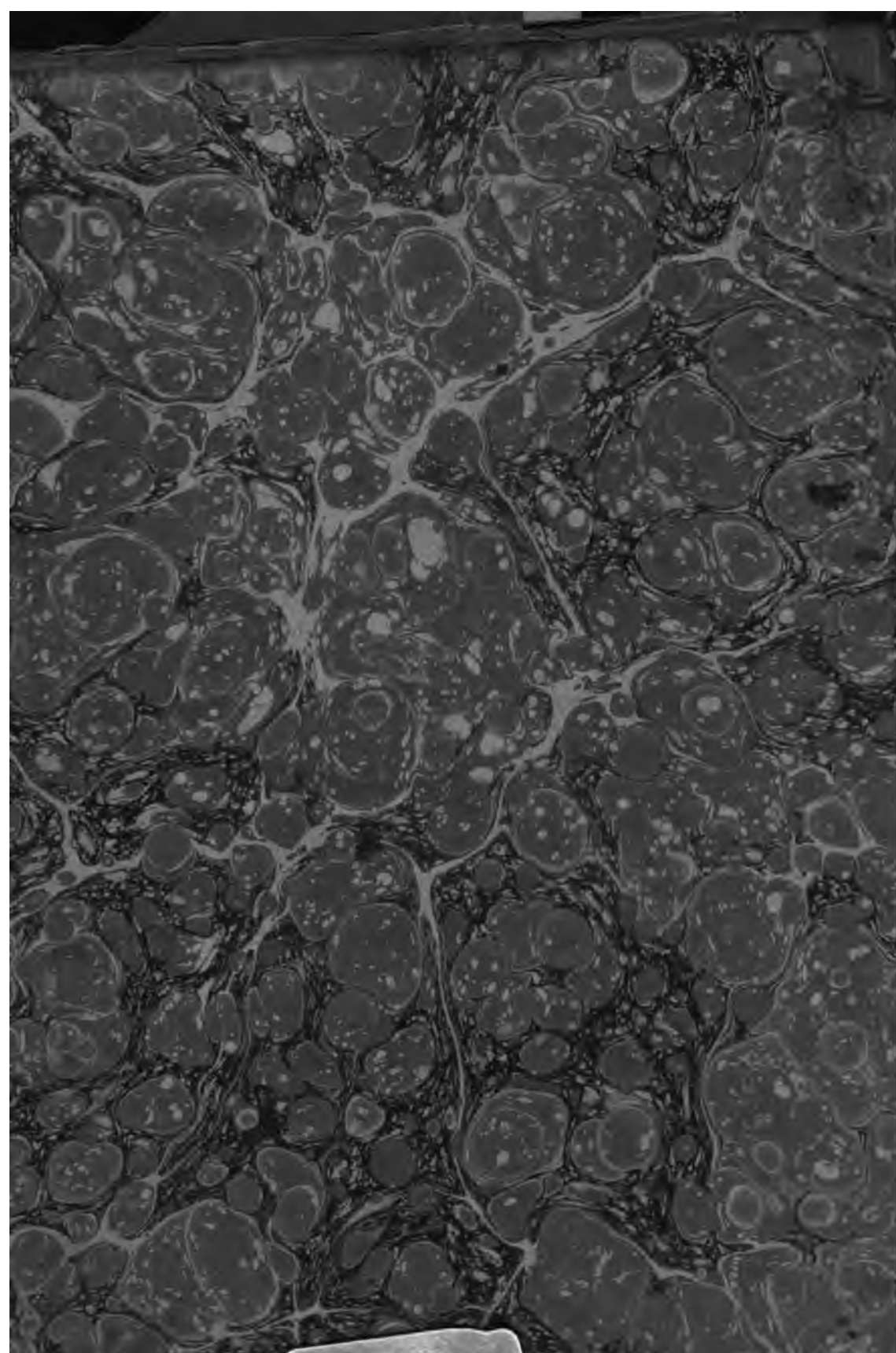
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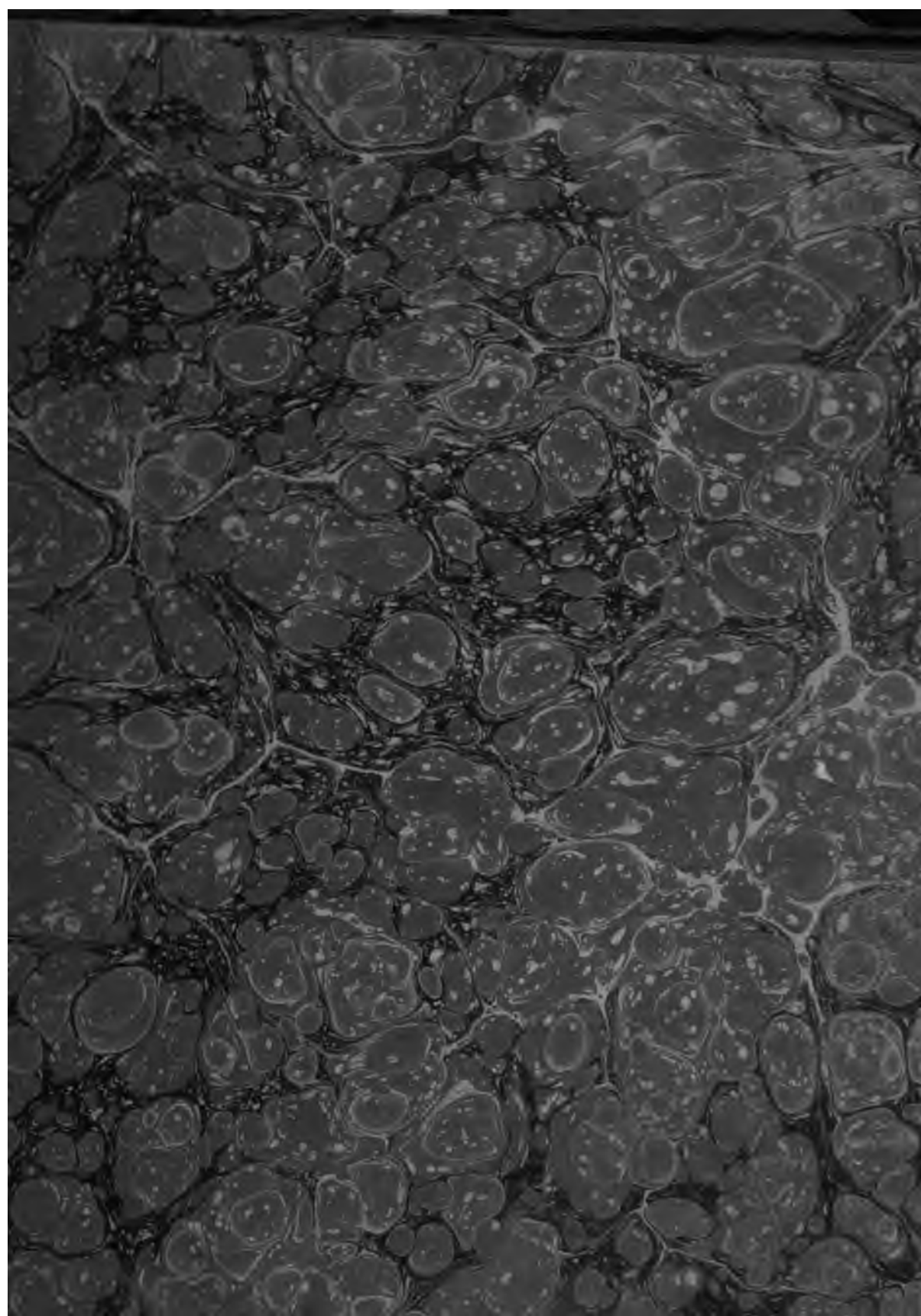
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1. 1/2

Georgiana, Gell.

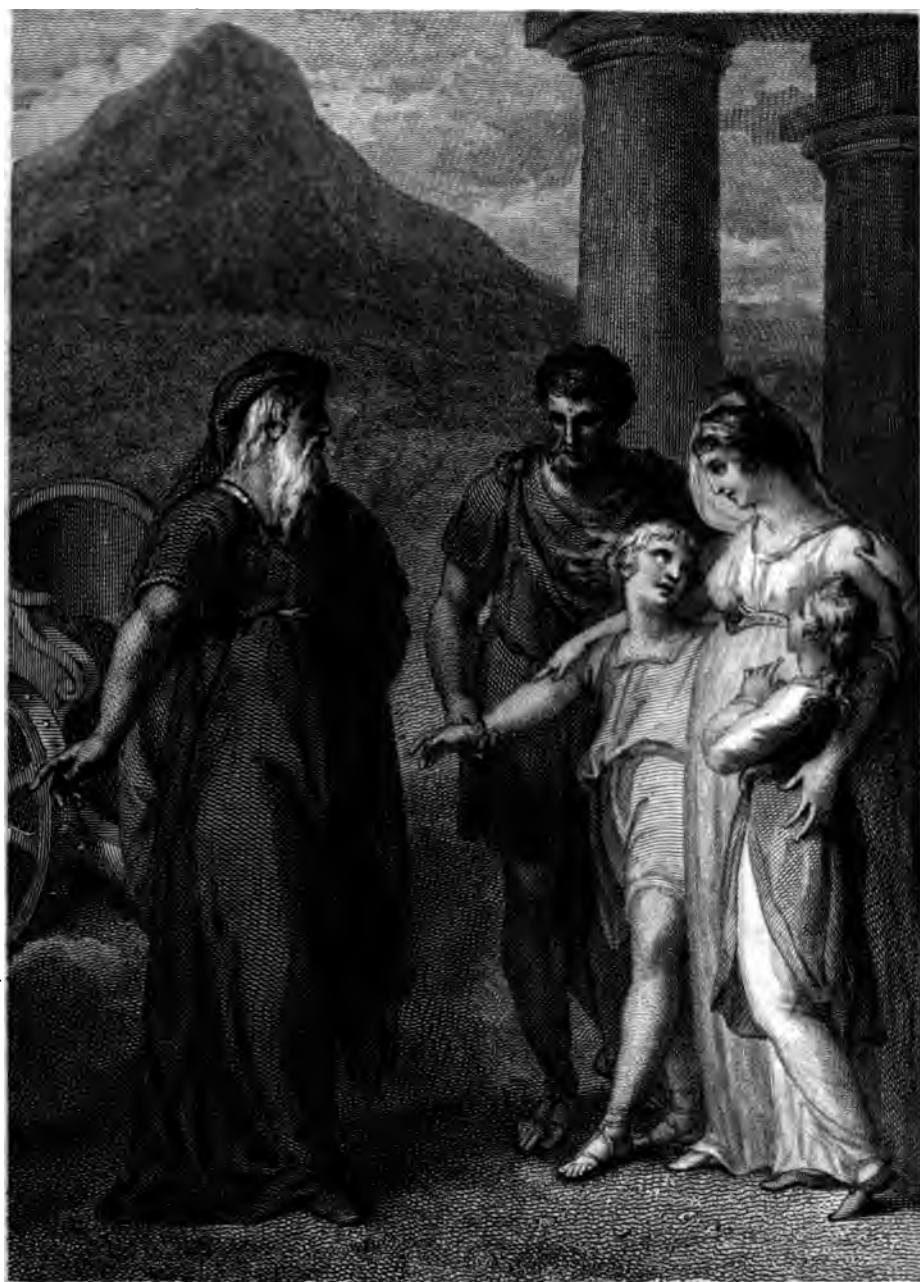
*The Gift of her Grandmamma
Hopton.*

1. 1. 1.

Georgiana, Gell.

*The Gift of her Grandmamma
Hopton.*





W Hamilton R.A. pinx.

F Bartolozzi R.A. sculp.

The lovely Berenice was now fourteen, and Lycidas twelve months young. When they became the pupils of Minerva; whom they knew by the name of Aristeus, the trio ascended the car, which was born away on the azure clouds, and quickly did they reach the Telepenestan shore. Page 33

London: Published as the Act directs, W. & A. G. 1799.

CONVERSATIONS
AND
AMUSING TALES.
OFFERED
TO THE PUBLICK
FOR THE
YOUTH OF GREAT BRITAIN.

“ Pensa alla dignità del tuo intelletto,
“ Non dato per seguir cosa mortale,
“ Ma perche avessi il Ciel per suo obietto.”

LORENZO DE' MEDICI.

“ Erwirb dir Tugend und Verstand,
“ Nicht um sie von der welt genannt,
“ Mit eitlem stolze zu besizzen;
“ Erwirb sie dir mit edler müh,
“ Und halte diess für Ruhm, durch sie,
“ Der welt und dir zu nützen.”

GELLERT.



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AND HARVEY, GRACECHURCH STREET.

1799.

260. e. 27.



TO
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE
PRINCESS AMELIA.

MADAM,

IN an age when, from the prevailing love of luxury and dissipation, it is generally supposed that vanity and vice have
a almost

almost risen to their highest pitch, it may not be considered a useless undertaking, to endeavour to recal virtue into society, by impressing just notions upon the minds of the rising generation. Attention to religion and morality, is now almost wholly neglected ; and we see the consequence of this neglect. Even the most sacred duties of society are continually violated. The noble judges from their benches have occasion constantly to enforce the necessity of a reformation in manners. But it is not when the mind is formed, and when habits have taken deep root, that this reform can be effected. Let

DEDICATION. vii

Let the evil be traced to its source. It will be found to have its rise in the present ill-conducted education of youth.

The instructors of both sexes seek to load the memory of their pupils with a variety of languages; to direct their judgement to different things, without any reference to the most important duties; and to make them shine in the world by dazzling accomplishments: but the instruction tending to promote the divine laws of religion, and the practice of virtue, finds no place in the modern system of education. If youth can be made to become brilliant, wealthy, and ad-

admired members of this world, the place they should be taught to expect in the next, is not even thought of.

In the instruction of the young, it seems necessary to unite gayety with seriousness. The lively temper of youth requires that even serious truths should be told them in an amusing manner.

If this little work, in which a young family in real life is represented, and not mere imaginary characters are drawn, can interest and amuse, while it conveys some just notions to other young persons, the author will rejoice that her pen has not lain inactive,
and

DEDICATION.

ix

and that the youthful scenes she has traced,
are made publick. To her feeble attempt,
success seems already in some sort ensured,
by the patronage of a young Princess, who
derives greater lustre from the virtues of the
family of which she is a member, than from
the glory of having received her birth in one
of the most splendid courts of Europe. It
may justly be the boast of the British nation,
that those who by their royal dignity are
raised to the most conspicuous station, are
not less distinguished for goodness than for
rank. May their virtues descend to each
branch of their numerous offspring ! may the
British

DEDICATION:

British crown long adorn the head it now
graces ! and when, at a late period, sharing
the fate of all earthly honours, it is laid
aside, may it be exchanged for a crown
of glory in immortality !

Since your Royal Highness is willing to
stand forward as the youthful friend of
virtue, by permitting me to dedicate this
little work to you, I beg to offer my publick
testimony of gratitude for the honour of
your patronage.

That your Royal Highness may have the
happiness of seeing your good example imi-
tated by all around you, and that your virtues
may

DEDICATION. xi

may ever secure your own felicity, is most
truly the wish of,

MADAM,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Greatly obliged and very humble Servant,

HARRIET ENGLISH.

MAY 19th, 1799.

ERRATA.

- Page 38, Line 3, for *from* read *form*
47, — 15, dele the *s* in *imitations*
84, — 18, for *confiderable* read *considerably*
105, — 1, for *has* read *his*
147, — 11, for *again*. *You* read *again you*
196, — 13, for *farther* read *father*
567, — 7, for *then* read *than*
— — 9, dele the ; after *found*

PERSONAGES.

ELIZABETH, }
CECILIA, } Cousins.

ISABELLA, }
MARIAN, } Sisters, visitors to Elizabeth.

HENRY, Brother to Cecilia.

SAMUEL, Brother to Elizabeth.

MRS. ABNEY, their Aunt.

[Entered at Stationer's Hall.]

FIRST CONVERSATION.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA, MARIAN, HENRY
AND SAMUEL, SEATED IN A CIRCLE.

HENRY.

LET Elizabeth, who is president of our little assembly, give us the *bouts rimés*.

ELIZABETH.

I will. And each shall, in turn, write a couplet. But as we are not poets, I fear our verses will not always be smooth. What then shall be his forfeit, who writes a limping line?

A

CECI-

CECILIA.

Shall we, for the entertainment of the rest, oblige all such blunderers to repeat a *bon mot*, or witty saying?

ELIZABETH.

Agreed. Here then are some *bouts rimés*.

-	-	-	-	far.
-	-	-	-	star.
-	-	-	-	love.
-	-	-	-	prove.
-	-	-	-	fled.
-	-	-	-	said.
-	-	-	-	time.
-	-	-	-	rhyme.

SAMUEL.

Now pray, Elizabeth, give us the example, by writing, yourself, the first couplet.

ELIZA-

FIRST CONVERSATION.

3

ELIZABETH.

Come then, to begin.

Tell us ye learned, tell how far,
The pole is from the polar star.

CECILIA.

Were Sir Isaac here, my love,
The distance he would clearly prove.

ISABELLA.

But though from earth great Newton's fled,
Fame has recorded what he said.

SAMUEL.

I've learn'd by Newton's valued store.
'Tis two degrees, and something more.

HENRY.

Sam has, I think, improved his time;
He gives the answer; and in rhyme.

A 2

CECI-

CECILIA.

Our knowledge of the rules of poetry is too imperfect to enable us to discover the faults in these lines. I fear, therefore, we shall have no forfeits ; and I am a little disappointed ; for I hoped for some witty saying to make us laugh.

ELIZABETH.

Have a little patience, Cecilia. We will have another trial of our poetick skill. Here are some more lines to fill up ; and, Isabella, you may begin. When Marian's turn comes, I will take the pen and write for her. Now then, Isabella, for your rhyme.

ISABELLA.

Let us visit Parnassus, and ask the fair *dames*,
If they'll do us the favour to lend us their *names*.

ELIZA-

FIRST CONVERSATION.

5

ELIZABETH.

That's a very good plan. We may each meet a *friend*,
If we can but contrive the steep hill to *ascend*.

CECILIA.

The attempt is too daring. We never must *mount*,
For of mortals like us, they will make no *account*.

SAMUEL.

True ; — the Muses who govern both science and *verse*,
For true merit alone will their laurels *disperse*.

HENRY.

Calliope and Clio are first in the *train*,
And Euterpe, Erato o'er harmony *reign*.
Behold Melpomene next ; and then, hand in *band*,
Polyhymnia, Terpsichore grace the fair *band*.

ELIZABETH, *for* MARIAN.

See pensive Urania. She holds her mild *sway*,
While Thalia delights us with her sprightly *lay*.

SAMU-

6 FIRST CONVERSATION.

SAMUEL.

Our *wish* to visit Parnassus seems, I think, favourable to our poetick talent ; for though a judge of poetry might censure our lines, we do not see any defect that can claim a forfeit from any one.

ISABELLA.

I am tired of rhyming. Let us change this play for something else.

CECILIA.

With all my heart.

ELIZABETH.

Well then, for the Trojan horse. I give out the lines ; and each one must repeat my words exactly, or forfeit. Here. Take this.

CECI-

FIRST CONVERSATION.

7

CECILIA.

What is this ?

ELIZABETH.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

CECILIA.

Take this.

ISABELLA.

What is this ?

CECILIA.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

ISABELLA.

Take this.

MARI-

MARIAN.

What is this ?

ISABELLA.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

MARIAN.

Take this.

HENRY.

What is this ?

MARIAN.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

HENRY.

Take this.

SAMU-

FIRST CONVERSATION.

9

SAMUEL.

What is this ?

HENRY.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

SAMUEL.

Take this.

ELIZABETH.

What is this ?

SAMUEL.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before.

ELIZABETH.

Take this.

B

CECI-

10 FIRST CONVERSATION.

CECILIA.

What is this ?

ELIZABETH.

This is Sinon the sly,
Who trick'd Priam before ;
And then open'd the door
To the colonels, the captains, the soldiers of
force,
Who went in the heavy, the hollow, the high
Trojan horse.

CECILIA.

Take this.

ISABELLA.

What is this ?

CECILIA.

This is Sinon - - - - -

Enter

FIRST CONVERSATION. IF

Enter MRS. ABNEY.

ELIZABETH,

Ah ! It is my aunt. What an unexpected pleasure !

MRS. ABNEY.

Good morning, my dear children. How I rejoice to see you again ! Once more to be amongst you all, is an unspeakable satisfaction.

(They all run to embrace her.)

CECILIA.

We have thought your absence long ; and often have we wished for your return.

MRS. ABNEY.

I have thought it so too, my dear. But it was to fulfil a duty incumbent upon me, and not for

B 2

plea-

12 FIRST CONVERSATION.

pleasure, that I visited the gay city of Bath. I have now hastened my return, and travelled with some expedition, that I might be with you on this day ; — that I might congratulate you all, on entering another year, possessed of health, and surrounded with so many blessings. And now let me inquire how you have begun this day ; with what thoughts you have each of you commenced the year. This - - - - -

HENRY. (*interrupting her.*)

We have all been to church.

MRS. ABNEY.

My dear Henry, you are too hasty in replying. I was going to say that this question, although serious, would not, with my young Friends here, require an apology ; for they all know how desirous I am, at every proper season,

son, to promote their mirth. But in answer to you, my dear, I must say, that although you have been to church, from your manner I know *you* have not commenced the year as I would wish. Remember that if our public duties are not accompanied with suitable dispositions, they will be but ill performed. If you enter church with your head filled with the follies and vanities of life, how can your soul, with all its powers, ascend to Heaven? how can you then properly adore, and with gratitude praise the giver of every mercy? You should every day dedicate yourselves to the Almighty; but at some seasons you should more particularly meditate on the bounties of his providence. At the close of the year, if you consider right, you will naturally be led to reflect on that awful period when time will end, and when eternity will be opened to your view. You must

must then appear before a merciful, but a strictly just judge, who is now taking account even of your every thought. Numbers, some of your own particular Friends, have been called from their state of trial within the last year ; and life is still spared to you. You are again permitted to see the sun begin its annual course. Hasten, each of you, to improve this mercy. Resolve, from this day, to endeavour to correct every error, to conquer every wayward passion. Firmly determine, while you are busy in the pursuit of those little accomplishments, which it is desirable you should attain, which adorn life, and render you pleasant companions amongst your Friends, to strive to secure those virtues, which will enable you to rejoice in the prospect of immortality ; which will make you be glad at the approach of that day, when you will dwell for ever in his presence, who is purity
itself,

FIRST CONVERSATION. 15

itself, who is the perfection of all goodness. Will you allow me to be your monitor this year? Will you, each of you, permit me freely to point out every fault? I promise you not to be very severe. It will be my earnest wish to brighten your days, to promote those amusements which are well suited to youth, the spring, the cheerful season of life.

ELIZABETH *and* CECILIA *together*.

We willingly submit to be directed by you.

ISABELLA *and* MARIAN.

And we shall be equally happy in having you for our guide. We hope to remain with our Friends here for some time..

HENRY (*aside to* SAMUEL.)

I should like my aunt a great deal better if she were not so grave.

SAM-



46 FIRST CONVERSATION.

SAMUEL. (*laughing and aside.*)

This is a sermon. But what shall we say?

MRS. ABNEY.

From two here I think I have no reply. May I not count Henry and Samuel in the number of my pupils?

They both say ; Yes.

MRS. ABNEY.

Well, I accept that yes. Before the end of the year I think I shall have a more hearty assent to this proposal, should I renew it. And now tell me, what have been your occupations in my absence?

CECILIA.

To Italian, Drawing and Musick, I have chiefly applied.

ELIZA-

FIRST CONVERSATION. 17

ELIZABETH.

Sensible of the many days I have lost, I assure you I am striving now to employ diligently my time. I have been endeavouring to become perfect in English grammar, French and Geography; and I practise Musick.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am well satisfied with your accounts. As to Isabella and Marian, I know they have resided entirely in the country; and I expect from them much information on subjects with which I am myself unacquainted. But what have Samuel and Henry been doing? What have they to tell me?

SAMUEL.

Oh, I am always fagging at Greek, Latin and
C French;

18 FIRST CONVERSATION.

French ; and on Saturdays my head is half broken with an English theme.

MRS. ABNEY.

How is this, Samuel ? I recollect when you with pleasure, would pass hours in reading the history of England and the Roman history. Have you no longer the same wish to gain information ?

SAMUEL.

Yes ; I like reading more than ever. I am now reading a very pretty work on the heathen mythology, written by M—de Monstier. But those exercises and translations take up so much time, and are such *a bore*.

MRS. ABNEY.

I know Samuel is not idle, and that what he
is.

FIRST CONVERSATION. 19

is now saying is entirely from want of reflection. If you find pleasure from reading, my dear, think what a wide field of satisfaction you open to yourself, by becoming master of the languages of ancient Rome and Athens. How many excellent authors wrote in Greek and Latin. And it is impossible for a translator to transmit all the beauties of an original, even were translations made with twice the care usually bestowed on them. But as to the difficulty you speak of, in making themes, were you frequently to accustom yourself to think with a little steadiness on different subjects, and to place some order in your thoughts, you would soon be able with ease to write a theme, on any subject that might be given you.

SAMUEL.

I will try to do so ; for though I am sometimes idle, I really wish to improve.

C 2

MRS.

MRS. ABNEY.

And what has Henry been learning ?

HENRY.

Oh, I can never learn at school ; the masters are all so illnated.

MRS. ABNEY.

And tell me, when you find them, what you term, illnated, do you redouble your efforts to please ? Do you by diligence and goodness on your part, seek to regain their favour ? I fear not. Think what a laborious task it is, to give instruction to one unwilling to receive it. It must be real benevolence and kindness, that can make a person take pleasure in teaching. And even where those dispositions are possessed, still the temper will sometimes be ruffled. Are you
never

never out of humour and peevish when engaged in a game at cricket ? or are you never angry, or pettish, with a schoolfellow, should he chance to run across the ground you have been chalking out for a game at marbles ? Ah ! Henry, conscience, if you let it speak, will tell you that this is often the case ; and that you constantly stand yourself in need of indulgence. How much then ought you to show, to those who may sometimes fall into an error, from excess of anxiety to instruct you.

How valuable is improvement. Knowledge is a pearl above all price. Grateful then, indulgent and kind, ought you to be to those, who labour to give you, what nothing can repay. But, my dear, I fear you are not yet sensible of the advantage of improvement ; and I may possibly now tire you, without doing you the good I wish. I will reserve what I have further
to

22 FIRST CONVERSATION.

to say on this subject till another time. I hope to hear something more pleasing about your drawing. How does that go on ?

HENRY.

Drawing I like very much. I could draw all day, if my master would but give me pretty examples to copy.

MRS. ABNEY.

Dissatisfied too with your drawing master ? Come, I must try to put you in a better humour with yourself, and with all around you. What will you say, when I tell you that I have been making a little collection of drawings, for your amusement ? I hope to assemble you all, one day in every month ; and I mean each time to produce one of my drawings, and to adjudge
it



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FIRST CONVERSATION. 23

it as a prize to the one with whom I shall be most satisfied.

HENRY.

Oh, thank you, aunt, I shall like that very much ; only I know Samuel will always get them, because you love him best.

MRS. ABNEY.

Henry, you are mistaken ; partiality will have nothing to do in the decision ; merit will gain the prize ; and generally, merit in drawing. Now as you are a better draughtsman than Samuel, you have a greater chance of getting the drawings. As an encouragement to you to deserve the rest, I present *you* with the first. I commend to you all to copy it, as a lesson in drawing. You will observe that it is descriptive of this month, January. You see there the little
feathered

24 FIRST CONVERSATION.

feathered songsters, driven from their leafless branches, flying to the roof of man for protection. Indeed this is a season for the universal exercise of benevolence and charity. You are surrounded, even in this village, with numberless objects, whose poverty deprives them of the necessities and comforts of life. I hope you will not only never neglect to relieve distress, but always cheerfully embrace each opportunity offered you, and do good to the very extent of your power. When your purses oblige you to be bounded in your gifts, still remember, that even an expression of kindness, is an unspeakable comfort to distress. Be, therefore, ever humane and kind. And withhold not your charity from those who are in want, because you may suppose them undeserving of your regard. Remember that if our Almighty Father were only to give his benefits to those who deserved them, we
should

FIRST CONVERSATION. 25

should none be partakers of his mercies ; for we are all constantly rendering ourselves unworthy of his blessings. He is still bountiful and good to the whole creation.

MARIAN.

But is God bountiful to the poor ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Surely, my love. Even that beggar yonder, who is imploring the pity of each passenger, he is probably endowed with reason, and possesses the faculties of hearing and seeing, and likewise that of speech, which enables him to make known his wants ; and are these not blessings above all value ; blessings which claim eternal praise ? And even those, who by a stroke of adversity, still more severe than that which takes wealth away, may be deprived of some of these

D

facul-

26 FIRST CONVERSATION.

faculties, have they not to be grateful for the cheering sun, for the boundless beauties of nature, with which we are all surrounded, and which is the undivided property of each one ; and above all, for that, which is an exhaustless subject for gratitude, the hope of immortal bliss, which is offered alike to every one ? Is my little Marian satisfied with my answer to her question ?

M A R I A N.

Yes ; I see that Almighty God is very good ; and I will try to be good that he may love me.

M R S. A B N E Y.

That is right, my child ; and if you are good, he will love you. But though our conversation has been, I hope, in some measure profitable to you all, I fear you have thought it rather serious. I must therefore enliven the close of my
visit

FIRST CONVERSATION. 27

visit with a tale, which I brought purposely for your entertainment ; and very glad shall I be, if it amuse you. Shall I read it ?

ELIZABETH, (*and the rest.*)

We shall all listen with pleasure.

MRS. ABNEY.

I now take you back to a distant period. You must fancy yourselves in the year of the world, about 3590.



A T A L E.

THE Gods had long beheld with pleasure the good Menalcas, who lived in the island of Crete. He was distinguished by his learning, his wisdom and piety. He was born in the city of Gortyna, and there held a considerable appointment in the state ; but being blessed with a family, he resolved to quit the court, to devote himself wholly to the education of his children. His wife, the virtuous Sabina, though still delighting in the gay scenes, to which she had been ever accustomed, was ready to submit to the will of her husband, and to resign pleasure at the call of duty. She cheerfully therefore resolved to accompany Menalcas, and to be the guide of her children in retirement. Their eldest son, the young Hyrcanus, was twelve years
of

of age, and their three other children, Berenice, Lycidas and Emira, were yet in their infancy. They fixed on a delightful valley at the foot of Mount Ida, for their residence. Here they passed their days in tranquil pleasures. Each morn, with the rising sun, they frequented the temple of Jupiter, and there taught their infant offspring to pay their vows, and to adore with humility the great God of Crete. They then returned to their dwelling ; and while Sabina was employed in instructing her daughters in the care of the dairy, and the affairs of the house, the good Menalcas led his boys to the fields ; sometimes to the vineyards, or the olives, sometimes to gather in the ripened corn. Bountiful nature, in this happy island, was abundant in all her gifts. These cares being ended, the family once more assembled, while Menalcas unfolded to his listening children the page of learning, or instructed

structed them in the useful and ornamental arts of life. And again the setting sun found them in the temple, there performing with devout attention, each religious rite.

'Twas thus they passed many years; happy, and deserving to be so. The young Hyrcanus had now nearly attained manhood. He was cheerful, gay; still devout to the Gods, and submissive to his parents. Instructed by his wise sire, he could trace out the ways of the planets, was well acquainted with the fine arts that adorned Rome, and versed in the sciences which were the pride of Athens. Such was Hyrcanus, whom his parents beheld with pleasure; when one morning Menalcas thus addressed him; "My Son, it is time your youthful vigour should be employed in active scenes; it is now time the talents you have acquired, should become useful to your king, serviceable
to

to your country. Go then, my child ; return to your native city. There put in practice the good precepts you have received ; there render beneficial to mankind the learning you have attained. I cannot be your guide. The remnant of my days must be devoted to the care of your sisters and your brother. But let religion govern you. Let that reason be your monitor, which your mother and I have with so much pains laboured to open, and which we now with pleasure see ripened almost to maturity. Continue good ; and the Gods will make you happy. Go, my child. Our tenderest blessing attends you." Hyrcanus having thus received the instructions of his father, and taken an affectionate farewell of his beloved family, set out on his journey. The remembrance of his father's merits ensured to the son a welcome reception at court. His sovereign conferred on him the highest

highest honours, and gave him the places Menalcas had formerly held. His openness and frankness delighted the king ; who having put his integrity to several trials, and found it stand each test, placed unbounded confidence in the virtuous youth. He seemed now at the summit of happiness. But alas ! the gilded domes of pleasure too often attracted the young Hyrcanus. Accustomed to live in retirement, to be surrounded by those amusements only, in which he might with innocence join, he could scarcely suppose any others were to be found in the world ; far less did he imagine that in Gortyna, in the city to which his father had sent him, he was surrounded with pleasures, in which if he partook, he must become criminal. The young triflers of his own age, eager to raise their reputation by appearing the companions of Hyrcanus, constantly enticed him to their parties ; and soon

was

was he engaged in a round of dissipation that unfitted him to be the counsellor of his king, or the administrator of his justice.

Having given himself up to the guidance of bad companions, with them he often spent his evenings in intemperance ; and the following mornings were passed in that idle inactivity, which is the sure consequence of excess. Still he preserved the integrity of his mind. Never did he abuse the confidence reposed in him ; but he now found himself unqualified to advise in the councils of state. The licentious crowds in which he passed his evenings made him forgetful of the religious rites he used with such punctuality to perform ; and the drowsiness of the mornings again interrupted his addresses to the deity.

'Twas thus, the once innocent Hyrcanus, was now passing his life. He still was the care of

E

the

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the Gods, being the offspring of their highly favoured Menalcas. One night, when all nature was inwrapped in silence, and darkness, and Hyrcanus was recovering from the fumes of the luscious grape of Crete, which the preceding evening had intoxicated his senses, Jupiter appeared to him. Young man, said he, hasten from these busy scenes. Want of experience unfits you for the situation in which you are placed. By vicious advice and example you have been led astray ; but your mind is still unhurt. Leave then quickly the city ; return to your father ; with him reflect on all you have seen, on your own errors ; and repair that health which intemperance has wasted. Perhaps in a few years you may be qualified to return, and resume your office. Heed my admonitions ; and with the rising sun depart.

Hyrcanus in the morning was inclined to
consider

consider this only as a dream ; but reflecting a little, and finding the command he had received so conformable to that monitor Reason, to which his father had ordered him ever to attend ; he could not doubt that Jupiter had really appeared to him. But he thought with reluctance of quitting the city, in which it seemed to him that pleasure was centred. Fearing however to disobey that God he had been taught from his infancy to reverence, he overcame his reluctance. He hastened to the palace, obtained an audience of his sovereign, resigned the dignities and offices he held, and returned to his peaceful home.

The good old Menalcas listened with pain to the narrative of his son ; his heart was rent with grief in hearing of the errors into which his inexperience had led him. In the first agony of disappointment he exclaimed. “ Have

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I then

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I then unfitted my children for that active life in which I wished them to engage ? Must they live alone for themselves ; and is it impossible they should be beneficial to society ? ” But recollecting himself, he checked these expressions of sorrow, and joined with Sabina in giving a tender welcome to his son ; and they both encouraged his return to virtue. Berenice and Emira, who were grown and improved in the absence of their brother, ran to embrace him with affection and joy ; but the embraces of Lycidas were mingled with tears ; for *he* perceived that some chagrin oppressed his beloved Hyrcanus. The Gods beheld with pity this virtuous family ; and a council was held in the upper worlds to consult how the good Menalcas should be rewarded, and his present distress softened ; when Pallas thus addressed the sire of the Gods ; “ Great father Jove, listen with indulgent ear to thy suppliant daughter.

daughter. Let the good Menalcas be my care ; resign to me the guidance of young Lycidas and fair Berenice. I will assume a human form ; and protected by me, and my powerful egis, safely shall they become the spectators of various scenes. I will show them, vice triumphing for a day, bewailing the morrow ; while humble virtue without a triumph, blooms through ages immortal. Thus shall they gain experience, themselves unhurt. I will then restore them to the paternal roof, beauteous, good, as they now are ; their own virtue secured by their having learned the full value of goodness, and having seen in others the bad effect of swerving from the right path. Then shall they become a solace to Menalcas and Sabina in their old age, while this good pair shall have the increased happiness of seeing their offspring a blessing to the world ; and perpetual incense of praise will

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will rise to the Heavens from the island of Crete, for permitting such perfect spirits to wear the frail form of humanity." A nod of approbation that shook the vaulted sky testified to Pallas the consent of Almighty Jove ; and away she hied to assume her charge. She descended in an aerial car, herself wearing the appearance of a venerable old man.

Menalcas and his family were quitting the temple, when this car awaited them at the gates. The heavenly visitant having made known his errand, Menalcas and Sabina were prevailed with to part with their children ; which perhaps in such early youth, they had not consented to do, if the trial of Hyrcanus had not shown them the difficulty an inexperienced youth must find in passing properly through life. The lovely Berenice was now fourteen, and Lycidas twelve months younger, when they became the pupils
of

of Minerva ; whom they knew by the name of Aristeus. The trio ascended the car, which was born away on the azure clouds ; and quickly did they reach the Peloponesian shore.

The first place that Aristeus pointed out to them, was Sparta, famed for her hardy warriors, and the severity of her laws. They were admiring the regularity and order which reigned through the city, when suddenly the attention of Berenice was attracted by a youth, in whose bosom an elderly woman had just plunged a dagger. Ah ! said Lycidas, he is not older than my brother ! The sight you are contemplating, replied Aristeus, is indeed barbarous. You behold there a mother, killing her own son. The timid youth has fled from the field of battle ; and the mother fancies she is following the strict dictates of justice, in avenging, herself, the supposed crime. It was a fault cognizable by the
state ;

state ; though humanity should have dictated even to his judges, to spare life ; but 'tis barbarous thus to see a mother hurrying her own son into eternity. But turn on that side ; you will see what is scarcely less shocking. Look at that infant, born but a few hours since. It is already condemned to death. There stands its father, who has yielded cheerfully to its condemnation. An assembly of old men have examined the babe ; and from the appearance of its limbs judged that it would be lame, or at best weakly ; unfit, in short, to form a robust soldier ; and its tender spirit is therefore to be sent to the Elysian Fields ; for it is now going to be thrown into a cavern at the foot of mount Taygetus. How inhuman ! How ill judged ! The infant must be happy ; for it has neither offended God, nor man ; but what superiour felicity would have been its portion, had it been permitted

permitted to live. In its mind were the seeds of wisdom, and of all goodness ; the Gods had created it to be a blessing to mankind ; and with exalted bliss would have rewarded the exercise of its ripened virtues. But let us quit these scenes of barbarity. Leave them not however without learning this useful lesson ; man should apply to the Gods for assistance in every circumstance ; and particularly should their aid be implored to enable him to *judge aright*. The Spartans love virtue, and fancy they obey her laws ; but their judgment is erroneous. And how fatal the consequence !

The wheels of the rapid car were now again put in motion. They quitted Laconia, and next stopped over a populous city, whose inhabitants seemed moving in every part. Aristeus informed them, that this was Olympia, the capital of Elis, famed for her games, which consisted of wrestling,

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ling, racing, &c. and were held every four years. Some of the games said Aristeus are just now ended. You see there the conquerors returning amidst the applauses of the people. But let me point out to you a domestick scene, that must interest your youthful minds. Behold there a whole family in tears ; mother, sisters, father, all bewailing the untimely death of a boy of thirteen. This youth, notwithstanding the prohibition of his parents, had quitted his home ; eager to be a spectator of the games. The same curiosity which prompted him to the first step of disobedience, made him rashly venture too near a chariot, that had just reached the goal ; the crowd pressed upon him, and the youth was killed. Now behold the unhappiness this poor boy has caused by his disobedience ; see his family ; hear one of his sisters—Oh ! she says, and more sad it will be, when my eldest brother comes

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comes from the races ; he will be so grieved ! Lycidas and Berenice could not withhold their tears at this moving sight. They mutually resolved never more to cause Menalcas and Sabina any anxiety, but to rely on their parents judgment, and to obey them most strictly. But still their grief was so great, that Aristeus to divert their attention, again set the car in motion ; and after some days they reached Corinth.

Now, my children, said Aristeus, look down on the inhabitants of another great city. They obeyed ; but soon they both exclaimed, Oh ! I am sure I shall not like the people of Corinth ; they appear all so idle ; and some half mad. And so they truly are, replied their sage guide : and you there see a picture of most great towns. You will observe it is evening with them ; the business of their day, has ended with the morning ; and it is thus they pass the remainder of

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their time. Look on that side ; see large companies at banquets, intoxicated with wine, their reason lost ; some quarrelling ; all giving way to the brutality of passion in various forms. Now look at those sumptuous buildings, disgraced by the persons they contain ; large parties of men and women, all assembled to gamble. It is shocking to see crowds thus collected, to squander time, health and fortune. Look only at that table, where you see a beautiful female. She is the mother of a young family, and at present the mistress of a splendid fortune ; but she has yielded to this abominable vice ; and soon by her folly, will she, her husband and her children, be reduced to the utmost want. Next to her sits a young man. He has been brought up virtuously. His father with much anxiety accumulated a fortune, with the hope of leaving it to make the happiness of his
his

his child. He has just succeeded to the estate ; and see how he uses it ;—tomorrow night it will be wholly lost, and this silly young man reduced to beggary. Opposite to him sits one about the same age. He has nothing to lose ; for he possesses nothing. See his eagerness to win. But how absurd ! At this moment he is incurring a debt which he can never pay, and which will plunge him in endless misery. But 'tis enough, my children. You see the vice, the folly of all this ; you have the advantage of seeing it, without danger of having your passions blinded by moving yourselves in the midst of these criminal triflers. I enjoin you to profit of this advantage, by guarding against every similar folly when you enter the world. Oh, said Berenice, I hope we shall always have our revered and kind Aristeus ; he will then point out every error, and immediately will we correct it.

Every

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Every body here, said Lycidas, is wicked ; let us go to some other part of the world.

My son, replied Minerva, in the little space we have travelled over, you have seen a tolerable just picture of the generality of the world. But I will now show you that it is possible to be good, even in the midst of vice. Look at that family. How good ! How united ! They had the misfortune to lose a worthy father, about a year since. The pang of separation from their much loved parent was severely felt ; but time has now softened their sorrow, and grief is succeeded by a placid resignation ; for though they are all cheerful, with affectionate regret he is still remembered. Look at the mother, the bloom of her youth, scarcely passed, devoting herself wholly to the care of her children. She considers that her duties are now doubled ; and with strictness does she perform
them

them all. See that youth. He is only three years older than yourself, Lycidas ; and by his industry, his mother and his sisters are almost wholly supported. The sisters have been employed all day in useful work, and in the cultivation of their minds ; and now, in the evening hours, they are occupied in acquiring ornamental accomplishments. The prudent mother, presiding in all, presents these attainments to her children as their amusements. You see one sister accompanying with her voice, her well toned lyre ; another drawing a landscape ; a third, taking the resemblance of her brother, Berenice, to you I offer these young girls as models worthy of your imitations. Observe them well. And, Lycidas, though your situation widely differs from that of yon virtuous youth ; for you have a good father, and sisters who want not your care for a provision ; still
you

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you may copy him, in his diligence, his submission and docility to his parent, and his tenderness to his sisters. Be each of you, good like them.—I could still show you a variety of instances in the city of Corinth, both of virtue and vice ; but these will suffice for the present. We will now proceed to Athens.

Having passed the isthmus, they soon entered Attica ; and the car was suspended over the famed Athenian city. Listen, said Aristeus. They are debating in the Senate. What can be the subject of that orator's discourse ? he appears so earnest, and every one around him so attentive.—They attend—He seems to me, said Lycidas, to be persuading his countrymen to engage in war. Is that not shocking ? It is, my child, replied Pallas ; for it is a cruel and unjust war, he is persuading them to enter into. And mark the power of words ;—the
people

people were at first averse to this measure ; but they have already yielded assent to the opinion of this orator. Hear him — His language is nervous ; his periods elegant, well turned ; and his discourse delivered with such justness, such force, that he commands at pleasure the minds of all his hearers. But oh ! how is it to be regretted that speech is thus abused ! Without that admirable faculty, the reason and understanding of man, would be imprisoned within him ; but endowed with speech, he is enabled to be extensively useful in society. It is pity, that any one should thus pervert so great a blessing. Can war ever be justified ? said Lycidas. Yes, replied Pallas. A defensive war may be allowable. There are few other cases, in which a state can answer it to Almighty Jove, to hurry so many

G

spirits

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spirits out of the world ; perhaps to the shades below. But to enlarge upon this subject, would require much time. We will, therefore, leave it for the present ; for I wish you to observe that venerable sage. See, he is surrounded by his pupils ; and, how differently is he using the power of speech ! He is persuading the listening multitude to peace, to charity, to virtue. It is Socrates. Look at him ; admire, love him. Ah ! said Lycidas and Berenice, it seems impossible to see, and not to revere, that good old man.

Now observe, in that house, a man writing with great attention. It is Thucydides. And a few streets distant, there, another, surrounded with papers, engaged in the same employment. That is Herodotus. They are both writing histories, which will be read with admiration by posterity, many ages hence.—

Before

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Before we leave this seat of science, I wish you to remark with what assiduity and success, the fine arts are here cultivated. You see numbers engaged in musick, sculpture, painting. The fame of these Athenian artists will last as long as this globe is permitted to roll in the heavens.

Berenice and Lycidas were so delighted with all they heard and saw, that willingly would they have alighted from the car, to remain here: My children, said Aristeus, amidst this great people, so polished in manners, and so refined, I could show you numberless instances both of vice and of virtue. But you have already seen examples of both, in the different cities we have passed over. On that account, I turn not your attention to them here. Let us then proceed.

They travelled over Thessaly ; and looked
G 2 down

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down on Larissa, and on the beautiful valley of Tempe, close to the Peneus. They then entered Macedonia. They admired the city of Pella ; and Aristeus made them observe Stagyra, a city that was soon to give birth to a great philosopher, Aristotle.

They then passed into Thrace ; where they particularly remarked Bysantium and Adrianopolis. Having travelled over so vast an extent of country, Aristeus now proposed to go back to Crete. Highly amused as they were, they received with joy, the proposal of returning to their beloved family. Sabina and Menalcas saw their approach with transports of delight ; and Hyrcanus and little Emira ran to give them an affectionate welcome.

Minerva now resigned her charge ; smiled with complacence on her much loved pupils ; and hastened back to her native skies. All
she



FIRST CONVERSATION. 53

she had promised to her great sire was most exactly accomplished. Berenice and Lycidas became the delight of their family, and the admiration of the whole world. The employment of their life, which was prolonged to a very late date, was to do good, and be useful to their fellow creatures. And at death they left a well grounded hope with mankind, that their spirits only fled from earth to receive an exalted reward in a better world.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

This history has been long ; but I hope I am the only person present at all wearied. I am rather exhausted with reading. Have you been amused ?

(They all say)

Oh, yes, very much.

CECILIA.

Can we copy the actions of those who lived so long ago ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Surely, Cecilia. The heart of man is always the same ; though manners and customs may vary. Virtue and vice are the same in every age. You may therefore imitate every
worthy

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FIRST CONVERSATION. 55

worthy action ; and draw profit from histories of the earliest times ; and I hope you will even derive benefit from this tale.

(They all say)

We shall strive to do so.

MRS. ABNEY.

I must now wish my young friends good day ; and I am sorry I cannot promise them another visit until February.



SECOND

SECOND CONVERSATION.

ISABELLA, MARIAN, HENRY, SAMUEL, AND
MRS. ABNEY.

MRS. ABNEY.

I PROMISED my dear young friends a visit in a few weeks ; and here I am, returned with pleasure to keep my word. But how is it ? I do not see all I wished to meet. As I had fixed the day, early as I am come, I hoped to have found you all assembled.

SAMUEL.

My sister will be here presently ; and here, is my cousin.

H

Enter

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Enter CECILIA.

Good morning, my dear madam.

MRS. ABNEY.

Good morning, Cecilia. I am not pleased to find you still so late a riser. Here I have travelled from London ; six miles, before you have left your chamber.

Enter ELIZABETH.

MRS. ABNEY.

And here comes another idle girl. I may salute her in the words of a gentleman at Cambridge ;

“ Eliza rising with the dawn,

“ Steals roses from the blushing morn ;

“ But

SECOND CONVERSATION. 59.

“ But when Eliza sleeps till ten,
“ Aurora steals them back again.”

I should know by your countenance that you had been slumbering till a late hour. Early rising so lengthens the day, strengthens the health, and gives to the countenance such a pleasing appearance of good health, that I must enjoin you every one, as the year advances, to rise almost with the dawn. Will you obey my injunctions?

ELIZABETH *and* CECILIA.

Indeed we will.

MRS. ABNEY.

What is Henry looking at me for, with such anxious expectation? I guess he is thinking of a drawing.

H 2

HENRY.

60 SECOND CONVERSATION.

HENRY.

I just recollected that I have left my drawings at school. But I hope that will not prevent me from having a chance of gaining the one you have brought us ; for I assure you I have taken all the pains I could, to improve in drawing.

MRS. ABNEY.

I will prove to you then, Henry, notwithstanding your accusation on New Year's day, that I can be indulgent to you. The prize shall not then be given for a drawing. I will think of something else. Come, which ever of you can tell me, who was son of a king, uncle of a king, and father of a king, and yet never king himself, shall have the drawing.

HENRY.

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HENRY.

Oh, that is so hard, I cannot know it.

MRS. ABNEY.

You would find no difficulty in answering so easy a question, if you did but follow my advice, and pass a few hours daily in reading. You would then know that, and a great deal more. But what says Samuel?

SAMUEL.

I think it is somebody in the history of England.

MRS. ABNEY.

You are right. His name is in the English history. But what is it?

SAMUEL.

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SAMUEL.

I do not quite remember. But I believe it was one of the sons of Edward the third.

MRS. ABNEY.

It was ; John of Gaunt. He was the fourth son of king Edward ; uncle to Richard the second ; and father to Henry the fourth. The drawing is your's Samuel ; but remember, you did not quite answer my question. You knew something however about it ; and every one else was silent. Here it is.

SAMUEL.

Oh, it is pretty. What little bird is that on the branch ?

MRS.



№ 2.

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MRS. ABNEY.

It is intended for a Lark ; which as the poet expresses it, carols to the evening. Do you recollect the lines ?

“ As the Lark, with varied tune,

“ Carols to the evening loud ;

“ Mark the mild resplendent moon,

“ Breaking through a parted cloud.”

How, now, shall we proceed to amuse ourselves ? What say my children ?

ELIZABETH.

If you would allow me to choose, I would ask for another history. We were all so much amused on New Year's day.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

If the rest are united in that request, I can gratify you ; for I have with me a part of the same history I then read. You seemed pleased in accompanying Berenice and Lycidas in their travels through Greece. Perhaps you would like to go with them in a visit to Rome. You recollect I just told you that they lived to a great age ; but we did not enter into any of the particulars of their life.

(MRS. ABNEY *reads.*)

A TALE.

A T A L E.

SOME years after Lycidas and Berenice had been in Greece, they wished to go together to Rome. Menalcas and Sabina, though unwilling to part with their children, could not refuse their consent ; and they set out. Such perfect harmony reigned between them, that the wish of the one, was sure to be the desire of the other. If their opinions varied, they knew how to differ, and debate on a subject, without once bordering on contention. Thus linked in affection, and equally good, they were quite happy. In early youth they were the adopted children of Minerva ; and they ever remained her strict votaries.

When they arrived in Rome, they determined to begin by examining the city, and its
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build-

66 SECOND CONVERSATION.

buildings. The places of worship first drew their attention. The number of these was great ; but the Capitol was at that time the most remarkable. Rome was indebted to Tarquin the proud for this magnificent edifice, which covered four acres of ground. They visited also the temples of Saturn and Janus. The former was famous as serving for the public treasury ; the latter for being built entirely of brass. In times of peace, its brazen gates were always shut : but as the Romans were almost constantly engaged in war, this temple was rarely closed. At this time there were no theatres in Rome, excepting temporary ones, built of wood. These still were magnificent ; and very curious in their construction. They were divided into three partitions, one above another ; each partition consisting of a hundred and twenty pillars. The
pillars

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pillars of the first partition were marble ; of the second they were wrought in glass ; and the pillars of the third partition were adorned with gilded tablets. Between the pillars were statues and images of brass. But these buildings were not safe ; for they sometimes fell suddenly down, and caused a great destruction. Besides these theatres, they saw other buildings for publick amusements ; the Circi, which were appropriated to the celebration of many different games. They also observed large and sumptuous buildings, called Basilica. Here judges sat to hear causes ; and countellors received their clients. They visited likewise the Forum ; built by Romulus, and adorned with porticos by Tarquin. In this Forum was a sort of pulpit, in which causes were pleaded, orations made, and funeral panegyricks spoken by persons on the death of relations. They observed

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also similar buildings which served as markets.

The Porticos, Arches and Columns, which adorned the city, excited greatly the admiration of Lycidas and Berenice. The Porticos were curious and beautiful structures, joined to other buildings. The Arches were edifices generally raised to the honour of any person, who had gained a signal victory. In the vaulted part of the Arch, hung a little winged figure, representing victory, holding wreaths in its hands. This little figure was let down to place a wreath on the head of the conqueror as he passed through. The Columns were remarkable for their curious workmanship. The Bagnios, Aqueducts and publick ways, which claimed the attention of every stranger, did not escape the particular notice of our travellers.

Lycidas and Berenice, who had learned to think

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think justly from their former conversations with the goddess of wisdom, in their admiration of all human productions, did not stop alone there ; but looked up with praise to a superior power, that had so formed the head of man, as to enable him to conceive, and execute such wondrous plans.

The Romans were very attentive to their religious worship ; and auguries they regarded with superstitious attention. Numa considering fire to be the first principle of all things, built a temple to Vesta, and instituted the order of Vestals. These were four virgins who guarded the sacred fire. This fire was lighted every year on the first of March, by the rays of the sun. And if it happened to go out, it was considered impious to rekindle it, except by the sun.

Lycidas was curious to inquire of the Du-
umviri,

70 SECOND CONVERSATION.

umviri, respecting the Sibyl's leaves. The *Dumviri* were priests, who were the keepers of these manuscripts ; which were deposited in the Capitol, in a chest under ground. They told him that these oracles were never consulted, but by a special order from the senate, which was only issued on very particular occasions ; and that since they had been in office, they had not seen them ; but that the Sibyls were prophetesses who had all lived in different countries, and long ago. That amongst various other things, they had prophesied the coming of a Saviour ; and that all was written on the leaves of trees, which was the oldest method of writing.

Lycidas and his sister attended some of the Roman sacrifices. Each deity had peculiar rites, and different sacrifices ; but all were performed with great devotion, and many ceremonies.

Time

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Time with the Romans was, at this period, divided into twelve months ; but they had not a clear knowledge of the lunar or solar course, which caused considerable confusion. The days of the months were reckoned by Calends, Nones and Ides.

The Romans had several remarkable festivals and they were chiefly held in the first months of the year. Amongst the principal was the eleventh of February, called Feralia ; a feast in honour of ghosts ; at which time persons carried offerings to the graves of their deceased friends. The following day was the *feast of love* ; when the relations of every family assembled together, and had a feast. The ides of March was the festival of Anna Perenna ; held in honour of Anna, an old woman, who in the time of a great dearth furnished the poor with corn from her own store. On the
nine-

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nineteenth of March was the feast of Minerva ; which continued five days. During these days, youth of both sexes, prayed to the Goddess for learning and wisdom ; and offered to their masters presents, which were called Minervals. Lycidas and Berenice rejoiced in the opportunity of being present at the solemnization of a festival in honour of their beloved patroness.

The chief council of state, and one of the earliest institutions in Rome, was the Senate. The number of senators differed at different times. By Romulus it was limited to a hundred ; but it was afterwards increased. No decree could pass in this council after sun set.

Punishments amongst the Romans were very severe. Banishment, beheading, strangling, throwing a criminal headlong from a part of the prison, and crucifixion, were classed amongst capital punishments. Delivering up a criminal

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criminal to the fury of wild beasts, was only inflicted for very atrocious crimes, and on the most despicable creatures. There was another punishment confined to incendiaries ; wrapping the criminal in a coat covered with pitch, and setting it on fire. Military punishments were different from these ; and very ignominious, and disgraceful. But the rewards for valour and virtue, exceeded their punishments in a very superiour degree.

The publick Roman sports were the circensian shows, which consisted of chariot racing, and the representation of naval fights ; the shows of wild beasts, in which men engaged with the beasts, or the beasts were made to fight with each other ; and the combats of the gladiators, which were shocking and bloody scenes. The stage plays chiefly consisted of satires and mimick pieces. Tragedy and Comedy were not yet introduced on the Roman

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theatre.

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theatre. Besides these amusements, there were the sacred, votive, and funeral games ; all in honour of different deities.

The most usual habits of the Romans were the Toga, and Tunica ; which varied in colour, form and size, according to the age, dignity, office, wealth or poverty of the wearer. The Toga was a gown without sleeves, worn over the other dress, as a cloak. The Tunica was a close coat. The usual dress of the women was a loose vest hanging down to the feet ; and when they went out, they threw over it a long, open manteau. They dressed their heads with ribands and thin sashes. The Romans had several different sorts of shoes. The women wore a sandal, or slipper, without upper leathers. These were confined to females. By the men a close shoe was usually worn, sometimes red and embroidered.

Lycidas and Berenice though entertained with
all

SECOND CONVERSATION. 75

all they saw, the novelty that surrounded them, and the magnificence of the city, were not as well pleased with the Romans, as they had formerly been with the elegant and polished Athenians. They resolved however not to quit Rome, without examining more minutely some of the customs. On this account they readily accepted an invitation to be present at the celebration of a marriage. This people, according to their usual superstition, considered many days and seasons as very unfortunate. The whole month of May, and the Calends and Ides in every month, were classed amongst the inauspicious times. The happy period, as they supposed, for joining hands in wedlock, was the month of June; and it was in this cheerful season that the present nuptials were to be solemnized. The bride had previously received, as a pledge of sincerity from her lover, an

76 SECOND CONVERSATION.

iron ring. Each party was by birth a citizen of Rome ; for no contract of marriage could be made with any born in other parts. It was now evening. The bride appeared. Her locks were divided with the head of a spear, as a sign that she was marrying a man of a martial race ; and her dress was plain and simple. She was crowned with a chaplet of flowers, and wore a veil. Three boys, whose parents were living, led her to the house of the bridegroom. She was lighted by five torches ; and a spindle and distaff were carried before her. The door of the house was decorated with flowers and leaves. When she entered, keys were delivered to her ; and the bridegroom presented her with two vessels, one containing fire, the other water ; emblematical of purity and chastity. A splendid feast was prepared for the bride, and her attendants. The sumptuary laws
were

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were on these occasions disregarded. Part of the entertainment consisted of musick ; and the company sang admonitions to good housewifery. After the musick was over, Berenice was much diverted at seeing the bridegroom rise, and throw nuts about the room ; which the boys with eagerness collected. But she was told that this was to show that he gave up all childish amusements, and considered himself entered into a serious state of life. This was the concluding scene. And now Lycidas and Berenice took their leave of the company. The former was invited to return the following day, to a great supper given by the bridegroom to all his old companions. But the temperance of Lycidas made him decline this invitation ; for he had previously understood that the entertainment of the following day was always a drinking feast.

Soon

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Soon after this, they had an opportunity of attending a funeral. A publick cryer invited the people to the interment of a worthy citizen deceased. But Lycidas had a particular invitation to be one of the bearers of the bier ; for it was thought a mark of respect for any young stranger in the city, to assist in performing this office. Ceremonies, in some sort funeral, began with the Romans even before death. When all hopes of life were over, the nearest friends or relatives embraced the dying person until he expired. This was done with the expectation of receiving into their bodies the soul of their departing friend ; for the ancients supposed that the spirit took its flight through the mouth. After death the body was washed, anointed, wrapped in a garment, and crowned with flowers. The body was usually laid out by the nearest relation, and placed at
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SECOND CONVERSATION. 79

the entrance of the house. The attendants round the corpse made at intervals a great outcry, hoping by this means to stop the soul in its flight, or if possible to recall it. In the procession of the interment the corpse was preceded by torches, musick, women who sang the praises of the deceased, and sometimes by dancers. In the funeral of any distinguished person, such as the present, the corpse, with a train of attendants, was carried into the Forum ; and there the nearest relation mounted the rostrum, and made an oration in praise of the deceased. And now the body was carried to the burial ground, which was without the city, in a garden belonging to the family ; and there deposited, according to the custom, in a part near the road, to put passengers in mind of mortality. There were also publick burying grounds of two sorts ; one allotted to the poor, the other to very great persons. None
were

80 SECOND CONVERSATION.

were buried within the city, except the vestal virgins, or some who had been very extraordinary characters. And sometimes, instead of burial, bodies were burned on a pyre, and the ashes preserved in an urn.

Lycidas was now returned from this mournful ceremony. He pitied the sufferings of the mourners, who grieved for their departed friend; but the recollection of his own mortality, which is a natural remembrance at such a period, inspired him only with joy. For he looked forward with an assured hope, of being partaker in a blissful immortality. Lycidas and his sister frequently spoke on this subject. The only thing that gave them pain in the thought of death, was the fear lest the Gods should not call them both together; but that one should be left to lament the loss of the other, and to pass the evening of life alone.

Now it remained for Lycidas and Berenice to
attend

SECOND CONVERSATION. 81

attend a Roman repast. This they accordingly did ; and found it widely different from a Spartan meal. The time for eating was about three o'clock. This was the hour for their grand supper. Nor was it usual for the Romans to break their fast before this time ; and some did not make this meal until sun-set. The luxury of lying to eat, was only beginning to be introduced into Rome. In this party, where our travellers were, they contented themselves with sitting at table. The company consisted of nine persons. Three or nine guests were the usual number at table ; to express the number of the graces, or muses. Every person bathed before he entered the supper-room, and changed his usual dress for a light frock. Being seated at table, they began by washing their hands. Then garlands of all flowers in season were brought. These the guests placed

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82 SECOND CONVERSATION.

ed on their heads, and hung round their necks. Next, essences and perfumes were offered. The repast consisted of several courses, which were brought in on different tables. When the meal was removed, a table was placed covered with wines. Musick and dancing were performed for the amusement of the company during the entertainment. And at some tables the combats of the gladiators took place of musick. Berenice and Lycidas loved temperance too well, to wish to return to such repasts, where the folly of man was displayed by so much luxury and profusion. The Goddess of wisdom had blessed them with a large share of moderation. This made them sparing in diversions and in eating ; for they were convinced that life was not bestowed on man merely for these purposes ; through to partake of them, in a moderate degree, is necessary for the support of life.

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life. The time they considered better employed, was that which they passed in doing good to mankind, in acquiring knowledge to enable them to be more extensively useful to their fellow creatures, or in preparing themselves for a society beyond this world.

The only coin used in Rome at this period, was made of brass. There were three sorts of this coin; the *pecunia*, on which was engraved cattle; the *as*, which had on one side the beak of a ship, and on the other a Janus; and the *triens*, *quadrans* and *sextans*, which had the impression of a boat. Some years after this, soon after the war with Pyrrhus, silver coin was introduced.

Lycidas and Berenice determined to make some inquiry on a subject they had hitherto neglected; the education of youth. Perhaps they should more properly have begun with this

84 SECOND CONVERSATION.

inquiry. They resolved however not to leave the city without examining in what manner education was conducted in Rome. They found that the greatest care was taken of children from their earliest infancy. They were not resigned to nurses, but brought up in the very bosom of the mother ; whose whole employment it was to keep her house, and attend her children. To assist her in this duty, some matron was chosen, whose life and manners were without blemish. She was treated with the greatest respect ; and had a part in directing not only the instruction, but even the recreations of the children. Great attention was paid to the purity of their language. No improper phrase was spoken before children. And it was this early care that considerable helped to form the Romans to be eloquent speakers. Not only those who were brought up to the bar, but even in the field, every

SECOND CONVERSATION. 85

every commanding officer, was an orator : and oratory gave him great power over the minds of his soldiers. In the amusements of youth, oratory was still attended to ; for one of their diversions was a play, in which they acted pleadings of causes before judges, and then carried the condemned to prison. Youth was early trained to all manly exercises, which gave them agility and strength. When their reason was well opened, the ablest philosophers and rhetoricians were chosen for their tutors. And one thing that made instruction particularly easy, was the perfect love and respect that a pupil was always taught to feel for his preceptor. At seventeen, boys were brought to the Forum, and commenced the study of pleading. This was the custom whatever profession they were to follow. Each one who continued at the bar, fixed on some Grecian orator, whom he studied,

86 SECOND CONVERSATION.

ed, translated his works, and strove to make himself master of each excellency he possessed. Those who were destined later for a military life, occasionally made a campaign ; which was a recreation from study, and improved them in martial knowledge. Thus educated, young men did not go to the field with empty heads ; nor were they obliged to fly to dissipation to kill time ; for each officer was as well versed in science, as in the art of war. Strength, both of body and mind, was equally and universally attended to. Lycidas and Berenice approved in most respects of the Roman education. They found however that learning was yet only in its infancy. After this period it made a rapid progress in Rome.

Having now satisfied that useful curiosity, which led them to inquire into all that regarded this famous people, they left Italy, and returned
to

SECOND CONVERSATION. 87.

to their native isle. They made the best use of all the knowledge they gained. It enlarged their minds, kept their thoughts from trifling, and guided their conduct to all good. The law of justice was the invariable rule of their life ; and humility, ever the attendant on wisdom, their distinguishing characteristick. They valued themselves on no superiority they possessed ; but were indulgent and kind to the most illiterate. In Lycidas and Berenice the unfortunate ever found a friend ; and even the guilty flew to them for succour ; for they were always ready to pardon error ; and to point out the way to virtue and to truth.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Do you still continue to be pleased with the pupils of Pallas ?

ELIZABETH.

Oh, indeed we are pleased with them ; and greatly entertained.

CECILIA.

But is the account of the buildings in Rome, and of the customs of the Romans, that is given in this history, really true ?

MRS. ABNEY.

It is difficult to say that every thing was exactly as it is here represented. All I can tell you is, that this account agrees with the most authentick authors.

ELIZA-

SECOND CONVERSATION. 89

ELIZABETH.

I have heard my brother Samuel sometimes read the Roman history aloud ; and I remember hearing of the Pantheon, a building in Rome ; but I do not recollect that it is mentioned in this history.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am glad to find you paid such attention to your brother's reading, and that you have so good a memory. It is not mentioned here. The Pantheon was a very spacious and superb edifice. It was a temple dedicated to all the Gods, and built by Marcus Agrippa, son-in-law to Augustus. But Agrippa did not live till about the year 3950, which was long after the time you have been hearing of. Do you recollect likewise I said, that there was then no

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theatre

90 **SECOND CONVERSATION.**

theatre in Rome, excepting a temporary one built of wood ?

ELIZABETH.

Yes.

MRS. ABNEY.

Well, remember that Pompey the Great, built the first stone theatre ; and he was born in 3844.

ISABELLA.

In speaking of the care of children, you did not tell us how girls were educated.

MRS. ABNEY.

No more I did, Isabella. The education of girls was not particularly attended to. They were instructed to be good housewives. As a proof of this, you may recollect the circumstance
of

SECOND CONVERSATION. 91

of the spindle and distaff being carried before the bride. Elegant language was habitual to all ; and prudent mothers, no doubt, stored their daughters minds with good sense, and taught them to think as justly as those dark ages would permit. These are to be sure, in every age, some of the most necessary attainments ; but I would recommend to all my young female friends, who have the opportunity, to join to useful knowledge, elegant accomplishments. They are pleasing, and often an innocent employment for leisure hours.

SAMUEL.

I am sorry the Romans were so superstitious ; for I like them very much. But do not you think they had some reason in relying on the Sibyls leaves, as they prophesied the coming of our Saviour ?

M 2

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

I think, my dear, it is very doubtful that that was one of their prophecies, though tradition says so. You will observe that these leaves were very rarely permitted to be seen. And probably the historians who have transmitted to us the accounts, never saw them. All is possible to an Almighty God. He could surely give the gift of prophecy whenever it pleased his divine will. But I think it probable we should hear something of these Sibyls in Scripture, had they really possessed this gift.

HENRY.

It must have been droll to see the man get up, and throw nuts about the room.

MRS.



SECOND CONVERSATION. 93

MRS. ABNEY.

I should rejoice, Henry, to see you do the same thing, provided it were done from the same motive ; to show that you threw aside habits too childish for your age, and were beginning to think, and act with some steadiness. This will be the case soon, I trust.

I must now say, farewell. I recommend to you all to improve, and be good, in my absence. And at my return, I hope to find my dear children well, and happy as I leave them.



THIRD



THIRD CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA, MARIAN, HENRY,
SAMUEL, AND MRS. ABNEY.

MRS. ABNEY.

Who is prepared to win the prize to day ?

(They all say.)

How shall we try to win it ?

MRS. ABNEY.

That one gets it, who gives me the best answer to these questions. What is praise, and what is flattery ? Wherein are they alike, and wherein

96 **THIRD CONVERSATION.**

wherein do they differ ? Are they praiseworthy or blamable ?

SAMUEL.

This is as bad as a theme.

MRS. ABNEY.

I mean the questions to have this likeness to a theme ; that they should force you to disentangle your thoughts ; and oblige you to collect, and fix them with steadiness on one point. Now let me hear what you all have to say.

CECILIA.

When a person makes a compliment to another that is flattery ; but when he speaks in favour of one who is absent, that must be just praise.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Reflect, Cecilia, before you draw so positive a conclusion. Your assertion is not just. A compliment is not always flattery. It is a mere expression of civility ; and may mean *all* it expresses. And as to commendation of an absent person, that very frequently may be just praise ; and yet sometimes it is flattery of the most artful kind.

SAMUEL.

I will tell you what I think. When Elizabeth says I have done my translations well, thinking to make me go on, and get to the end of them, that is flattery ; because I know I have done them badly. But when I show my sums to my master, and he says I have done them right, that is praise ; for I know they are right ; I can prove them.

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MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Samuel, it is not of necessity that your sister's commendation should be flattery ; because it is not justly bestowed. Her own judgment may err ; she may have no intention of deceiving you. Her's is then more properly ill judged praise. And according to your account, your master's is only a simple assertion. He says that is right, which you can prove to be so ; but if he does not commend you for having done it well, he bestows no praise.

HENRY.

I am sure I do not know what it is, for every body finds fault with me. The masters at school say I never know my lessons ; and if I come home, my sister finds fault with something else.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

But, Henry, I think that only implies that you never deserve praise. You might still be able to say what it is. I advise you to strive from this time to merit praise ; and then perhaps from experience in receiving it, you may be better able to speak on the subject. What has Isabella to say ?

ISABELLA.

I know what flattery is ; but I do not know how to explain it. When I was at the assembly the other night, I made an apology to my partner for being very much out in the figure of the dance ; and he answered me that he *never saw any body do it better*. Now he did not please me, for I knew his compliment was an untruth.

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MRS. ABNEY.

You, I acknowledge, have given me an example of flattery, but not an example of its usual success. Now Elizabeth, what say you?

ELIZABETH.

All I can say is, that praise is a thing I like very much, and flattery I always despise and laugh at.

MRS. ABNEY.

If a laconick reply would bear away the palm, I think Elizabeth would carry it off. Still I can not give her the prize. There sits my little Marian; a silent listener. I shall expect to hear her remarks soon.—You will observe, my dears, that though you have all spoken on my questions, no one has given me an answer. Do you remem-

THIRD CONVERSATION. 101

remember what the questions were ?—What is praise, and what is flattery ? In what are they alike, and in what do they differ ? Are they praise-worthy, or blamable ? Now these are the answers, I should make. Praise and flattery are both commendation. So far therefore they are alike ; but in this they differ ; that praise is that just tribute of commendation paid to merit ; and flattery that fulsome applause, bestowed by insincerity on those it desires to please. Praise is then laudable, as it exalts, and adds dignity to virtue ; and it is the duty, as well as interest of every one, to contribute to raise a throne to virtue ; for she should be made an object conspicuous to the eyes of all ; that every one may look up, and take from her an example : but flattery is blamable ; because it is applause dealt out without measure, and generally bestowed on those qualities, in which to
excel

102 THIRD CONVERSATION.

excel is of no importance. It induces therefore people to value themselves on trifling advantages ; while they neglect to acquire essential virtues. — I know not to whom now to give the prize, without danger of incurring an accusation of partiality ; for no one deserves it. It shall then be determined by this ; whoever can relate a good story, applicable to the subject we have been conversing on, shall as a reward have the drawing.

ELIZABETH.

May I try first ? I have a story you once gave me. May I read that ?

MRS. ABNEY.

You may.

An

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ENTERTAINING STORY.

(ELIZABETH *reads.*)



ARPAGUS, king of a small island, at some distance from the coast of Asia minor, made it his delight to render his subjects happy, and to govern them with the strictest equity. He looked round upon his people, as would a tender father upon a beloved family. No guard surrounded his palace. He confided in his subjects' affection ; and that formed around him the strongest bulwark. Thus living in the centre of his little realm, he knew no fear, but the fear of erring. To do right was his warmest wish, and his hourly study. It was his desire that the
voice

voice of his courtiers, should be the voice of truth. He commanded them to speak to him with candour ; to tell him freely his errors, and to say even if they *thought* he acted amiss ; that he might have an opportunity of justifying himself, by explaining some reason, unknown to them, for his conduct, or that he might repair his fault if he had done wrong. The king of Lydia being on a visit to Arpagus, accompanied him one morning into the council chamber, when he attended to give audience to his courtiers. They looked up to their sovereign with respect, but conversed with him with that openness and plainness which marks sincerity. An old man present, said, my sovereign, your naval and military officers all greatly condemned yesterday, the warmth with which you reprehended, and even threatened Learco. His fault was not of such a magnitude as to merit so severe a reproof ;

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reproof ; though his want of judgment has been attended with fatal consequences. Recollect he was young, inexperienced ; yet you intrusted to him the absolute command of your fleet. It is true, he hazarded a battle when the enemy was strong, and your forces few ; and a defeat, and dreadful slaughter ensued. But his valour distinguished him through the whole engagement ; and all unite in praising his humanity afterwards. It is the universal opinion that his conduct is less to be blamed, than his want of judgement to be lamented. After your severity to Learco, when you visited the poor old man, whose only son had fallen in the battle ; when you strove to comfort him, and promised to sooth his grief, and be yourself the support of his declining years ; then every voice commended you ; then you acted well. Ah ! said Arpagus, that was a simple act of duty, not deserv-

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106 THIRD CONVERSATION.

ing of praise. I must indeed have been a stranger to pity, had I not commiserated such distress. But oh ! in what a strong, but just light, do you place my fault. How shall I repair it ? *I* was to blame. I placed Learco in a situation in which he knew not how to act ; and then, how I treated him ! The vehemence of my passions blinded me ; the piercing regret I felt for my subjects who had fallen, and for the sufferings of the mourners at home, stifled my reason and cool judgment. But I must repair my fault. Hasten to summon to me Learco. — He appeared. — My friend, said Arpagus, I still lament your rashness in engaging with the enemy ; but I still more condemn myself. I am sorry that I should yesterday have spoken to you with such unreasonable warmth. Willingly would I recall that moment, which I grieve for. But 'tis past. As
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an atonement for my fault, receive the order of the *Phoenix*, the reward of valour. All I require from you is, that for ten years you serve in conjunction with an old captain. You preserve your rank ; but he, for that time, must have the chief command. Learco impressed with gratitude, threw himself at the feet of his sovereign, thanked him, and withdrew.—When Arpagus retired, the king of Lydia said to him ; I am surprised to see with what freedom you suffer yourself to be treated. Where is the dignity of royalty, when the nobility thus behave ? How rudely did that old courtier speak, and say merely, “you had done well,” when you went in person to comfort that old man, who was bewailing the death of his son ; a thing he might naturally expect, if he sent him to fight. A more grateful people would have been enraptured with such a mark of condescension from a

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monarch.

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monarch. And then how boldly did the same courtier speak of your reprimanding your captain, as if you had done him an injustice. What is a king, if he has not power to act as he wills ? And then, where is state ; where is dignity with you ? Where are your coffers ? Where your guards ? Here you walk about alone, or only accompanied by a few old men ; no surrounding soldiers to defend you from secret treachery, or from open violence. Oh, said Arpagus, I have nothing of that kind to fear in the midst of my subjects. I possess their hearts, which is a defence stronger than the most powerful arms. Coffers I have none. My revenue, however, is so considerable, that it greatly adds to my happiness ; for it enables me to relieve the wants of numbers. As to the freedom with which my courtiers speak to me, that is a proof of their obedience ; for it
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is my express command that they should thus conduct themselves. When they say, "I have done well," I am delighted. I know they think so ; for I have so strongly impressed upon their minds my abhorrence of falsehood, that their desire to please me, makes them never depart from the strictest truth.—The king of Lydia, accustomed to the most extravagant compliments, knew not how to comprehend all this. He invited Arpagus to visit his court. You will there, said he, see what state and regal dignity truly are. No wants, that require relief, can there be in my realm ; for every countenance I look upon, appears smiling and joyful. My sumptuous palace, and spacious apartments command respect. If I move, the air re-echos with acclamations of joy, and professions of allegiance. — Arpagus accepted the invitation ; and the two kings embarked in their separate vessels.

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vessels. In the voyage a dreadful storm arose. They were in the greatest danger. In the Lydian ship, in the general confusion, not one recollected that the king was on board. The thoughts of each person centred in himself; anxious to preserve his own life, and the little property he had with him. On board the vessel of Arpagus, how different was the scene ! The people flew to their monarch ; they recollected that always living in the midst of his people, and being unaccustomed to the ocean, he might be more apprehensive of its dangers. They assured him that they valued not life, unless he could be preserved, who made life desirable to them ; that their anxiety was for him, who not only made them happy in living, but had instructed them to perpetuate felicity beyond the grave. The sailors, in the mean time, filled with the same sentiments, were doubly active in
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THIRD CONVERSATION. III

the care of the ship that contained their beloved sovereign. The storm at length ceased. On board the king of Lydia's vessel, the only care of the crew was to take their repose after so much fatigue. In the ship of Arpagus, the first care was to return thanks to the Gods for the preservation of their monarch ; and to their thanks they all joined earnest prayers that the life of Arpagus might for years be prolonged, and that his people might long preserve the blessing they now possessed, and were grateful for. — They soon reached the Lydian coast. The king being arrived in Sardis, formal and pompous congratulations for his safe return, were sent up to the palace from different parts. The streets of the city rang with compliments, and loud exalted praises of the monarch. The king pleased, now displayed before Arpagus all his wealth ; showed him the magnificence and
pomp

112 THIRD CONVERSATION.

pomp that surrounded him ; pointed out the Pactolus, that flowed round Sardis, making him remark its golden sands, that were the boast of Asia. Arpagus saw all unmoved. He envied not this king his grandeur, nor the splendour of Sardis. He valued not the praise he received ; he knew it was the breath of flattery. All he saw, served but to endear to him the moderation in which he passed his life ; and all he heard, but to render more estimable the plain voice of truth, which was addressed to him. When he took his leave of Lydia, he refused all the offered presents of gold ; and landing on his happy island, was hailed with the joyful assurance, that *welcome was his return.*

MRS.

THIRD CONVERSATION. 113

MRS. ABNEY.

I am sure you will all join with me in thanks to Elizabeth for this story ; which she has made doubly pleasing, by the justness and good emphasis of her reading. I am satisfied too with your choice ; for in that story we have an example that the voice of truth is plain and simple ; and that just praise is always moderate ; while extravagant professions are generally insincere, and not to be depended on ; for flattery waits not to examine if her words be true, satisfied if they are but pompous and pleasing to the ear. This story gives us likewise more than one useful lesson. You there see that if you desire to act right, you must be willing to hear your faults from every person ; and be ready to acknowledge an error the moment you perceive it. You may there too observe that

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114 **THIRD CONVERSATION.**

the best use to make of power and wealth is, to do good, and to relieve the necessitous ; and that no superiority of rank, or fortune, can exempt us from the duties of humanity ; which are incumbent on every one to fulfil. To you, Elizabeth, I now give the drawing without hesitation. You deserve it. Take it, my dear. What is given as a reward for merit, is valuable, however small may be the gift.

ELIZABETH.

It is so. But with this I am particularly well satisfied. It is very pretty. Are those not flights of rooks ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. They are. The rooks are as distinguishable among birds, for the good order that reigns with them, as the bees are in the insect tribe.



No 3.

THIRD CONVERSATION. 115

tribe. It is remarkable that both the rooks and bees appear to have a form of government ; but the government differs. With the bees, it is a monarchy ; with the rooks, a republick. These birds seem to have no fear of man. They frequently come in colonies, and build rookeries in groves, close to large buildings ; and sometimes place themselves in the midst of populous cities.

CECILIA.

You repeated us some pretty lines, descriptive of the last drawing ; do you remember any suited to this ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I can borrow for you some lines from the same poet, which will describe this little pictured scene very well.

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“ Where

116 **THIRD CONVERSATION.**

“ Where the rising forest spreads,

“ Shelter for the lordly dome,

“ To their high built, airy beds,

“ See the rooks returning home.”

ELIZABETH.

The lines are so pleasing, that they seem to give additional beauty to the drawing.

HENRY.

In the story Elizabeth read, there was something said about a *phenix*. I imagine that to be a bird. But in what country is it found? for I never saw one in England.

MRS. ABNEY.

I commend you, Henry, for your attention. To inquire, when you do not know a thing,
is

THIRD CONVERSATION. 117

is one of the sure ways to gain information. The *Phenix* was a bird, which, according to ancient historians, was found in Arabia, and always existed singly. Most of the accounts we have of this bird are fabulous ; yet perhaps you will be curious to hear something of this wonder of the ancient world. The *phenix* was about the size of an eagle ; and in longevity resembled an eagle ; for it was supposed to live for five or six hundred years ; and its plumage was very beautiful. But the account given of the beginning and close of this bird's life was most wonderful. When it felt the approach of death, it built a nest of wood and spices, and there died ; and a worm was produced from its bones, from which arose another phenix. The first care of the young bird was to collect the remains of its parent. Having made a ball composed of spices, in that it placed the
old

118 THIRD CONVERSATION.

old bird's body ; and then flying to the temple of the Sun, in the city of Heliopolis, it there burned the bones from which it had received existence. This account is very wonderful. We can scarce suppose it true. However, the representation of the phenix, perhaps on a medal, was, in the island we have been hearing of, a mark of distinction, bestowed, we find, as a reward for valour.

HENRY.

In reading the newspaper this morning I saw something about a *penguin*. Cecilia told me that was likewise a bird ? I never heard of it before.

MRS. ABNEY,

Yes. A penguin is a bird, known only, I believe, in America. I regret that I have not
time

THIRD CONVERSATION. 119

time to give you any account of it. Our conversation has not been so long as usual ; yet we must now separate. I have an engagement this afternoon, which obliges me to quit you early. Adieu. My love and best wishes remain with you all.



FOURTH

FOURTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, HENRY, AND SAMUEL.

MRS. ABNEY.

I REJOICE in another opportunity of visiting my beloved circle of young friends. You have seemed amused with the little histories we have read when we met together ; I have brought you therefore to day another. As it is long, shall we begin with it ? Do you agree to this proposal ?

CECILIA.

We all most willingly agree to that.

Q

A TALE.

124 **FOURTH CONVERSATION.**

hastened home ; for he found no amusements so pleasing, as those which Mathilda shared with him. It was thus they passed the first year of their residence in town ; Mathilda always under the watchful eye of her mother, Edgar's time divided between home and school. At this seminary of learning, which was numerous, various were the dispositions of the boys ; some idle ; some active in the pursuit of knowledge ; some of moderate capacities, yet willing to learn. Some joined to good abilities equal goodness of heart ; others added to idleness bad inclinations ; and others to many bad dispositions joined much good nature. Edgar, young, of a pliant temper, was easily swayed by any with whom he associated ; and unfortunately, he formed most particular intimacies with a few boys, whose only recommendation was that of good humour. Their chief fault was that of idleness ; but
this

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this was leading them to every evil. At first they began by persuading their new companion not *to be so soft*, as they termed it, as to tell every thing to his mother. With this advice the silly boy complied. He now concealed from his indulgent parent the little employments, and different amusements, in which he passed his vacant hours. These were the only scenes, in which at present he had to act ; and by no longer confiding in his best counsellor, whose advice might have proved to him a potent shield, he acted without a guide, and consequently ill. He sometimes repeated different little circumstances to his sister ; which she, thinking more justly than her brother, disapproved of ; but the fear of offending him, prevented her likewise from communicating them to her mother.

The good Mrs. Neville, gave to her children a liberal allowance of pocket money. She had
early

126 FOURTH CONVERSATION.

early instructed them in the proper method of spending the little sums they received this way ; not to be lavish in trifles for their own indulgence, but rather to place their gratification in pleasing others with little presents ; to spend some part in books ; and always to set aside a portion to relieve the necessities of the poor. She had so early enforced these instructions on her children, that they habitually spent their money in this manner, long before they left the country ; and she did not think that any more direction was necessary on this subject. The child who remained under her own eye she often saw, and was pleased to see, relieving indigence, cheering the cot where penury reigned, by giving employment to the young, and rewarding their industry. She *supposed*, Edgar did the same. He *once* did. But oh ! what a change. ! His shillings and pence were now all spent, and
seemed

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seemed even too few, to supply him with crackers, knives, canes, &c. One day, when Mathilda had asked her brother to accompany her in a little walk, a girl begged of them. Mathilda, turned a deaf ear to her entreaties ; she knew she could not relieve her ; for she had given her brother all that remained in her purse. His extravagance made him often want money, and his purse was also empty. The poor girl pleaded ; begged of them only to come and see if her mother did not want. They could not resist ; though penniless, they went. And what a scene did they witness ! A father stretched dead in one corner of a miserable hut ; a mother lying pale, sinking under the same fever of which her husband had just expired ; one little girl attending her, sister to the one who had been sent out to obtain a few halfpence, by imploring the pity of passengers. Edgar and his
sister,

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sister, wept ; they could not refrain from tears at such a sight. They thought a little.—But, to relieve them was impossible ; their allowance was not due for a month. They hastily went out ; Edgar saying, oh, we will do something for you, in a few days. The children thanked them ; said they were sure they would ; for they knew them ; they lived in the white house by the church. Mathilda continued affected with what she had seen. She was planning how she could assist them ; but Edgar was no longer humane as formerly. When the poor objects were out of sight, he forgot pity. On his mind now, impressions of goodness, “ like the morning dew, passed quickly away.” He charged his sister not to tell their mother. Ah, but, said Mathilda, what shall I then do ? I have nothing. And my mother is so good, she will forgive you this time for having spent your money ; and will perhaps

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perhaps give us a little more for this poor family. Edgar angry, desired, entreated she would not tell her mother. If you do not relieve these people, said he, they will find somebody else who will. Mathilda, pacified by this reflection, and fearing to make her brother angry, yielded to his desire. A few days passed on ; Mathilda still uneasy, but determined to carry this poor woman money as soon as she got any ; when one morning the child who had begged of them came to the door. Mrs. Neville, spoke to her. The child related what had passed ; and mentioned the promise the young gentleman had given them to come again ; but now, she said, her poor mother was dead, and her sister had the same fever. Mrs. Neville, surprised, could scarcely believe her children could know of distress they had not relieved, nor yet made her acquainted with. She applied to them. Mathilda

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was

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was obliged to confess all. Mrs. Neville, perceived with sorrow this change in her son. She began by showing them how ill they had acted in this instance. The poor woman, whose illness was a fever, had probably now sunk from want of medicine, and support. This she represented strongly ; and they seemed shocked, and convinced of their error. She hastened to send to the two poor girls attendants, medicine, and every relief possible : and then again turned her attention to her own children. She repeated to Edgar the good precepts she had frequently given him ; and strove now to give them double force by her tenderness, and affectionate manner. He felt the power of all she said, and promised amendment. Aware of his complying temper, she endeavoured to enforce this most useful maxim ; that it is a duty *to dare to be wise*, in spite of example and persuasion. She

strove

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strove to convince him that *wisdom* does not consist in *learning* ; which is only a guide to it ; but that the strongest proof of wisdom, is to guard from folly. Edgar repeated promises of acting better ; and they parted ; Mrs. Neville, embracing her son with tenderness, and Edgar receiving his mother's embraces with gratitude and affection ; for he still had a good heart. He returned to school. For two or three days, he remembered and observed all his mother had said ; but a half holyday being given, his former companions persuaded him to go with them a nutting ; they resumed their former ascendancy over him ; and now Edgar was again led astray. He foolishly believed, because they said so, that it was more manly to associate with them, than to go home to read to his mother, or to amuse himself with his sister. Instead, therefore, of passing his hours of recreation at home, they

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were now spent in walking about with these boys ; sometimes in fishing, or joining in other plays with them ; while Mathilda was wishing for her beloved Edgar, and Mrs. Neville, waiting with anxiety and uneasiness for her son. This good parent resolved again to try the power of admonition to reclaim him. She advised, and tempered her advice with so much sweetness, that added to the strength of her reasoning, her arguments were irresistibly persuasive. Edgar was again convinced that he was wrong, but at school he had not resolution to withdraw from these companions. He foolishly feared their ridicule ; and so continued to associate with them, depending on his own strength to resist temptations of doing wrong. This alas ! proved very weak. He learned to swear, lost the love he had once for truth, by frequently employing falsehood to hide some faults, and
to

FOURTH CONVERSATION. 133

to palliate others that were discovered. And all this proceeded from keeping bad company. He knew what was right ; but had not resolution steadily to practise it.

One day Mrs. Neville, who embraced every opportunity of giving good counsel to her children, gave them a useful lesson by drawing a just distinction between the expressions of *spending*, and *employing* time. The latter term, she said, could only properly be applied to those hours in which we were engaged in performing our duties ; but in those duties might be comprised even our recreation, if properly taken. She recommended to them never to *spend* time ; but in moments of mere amusement, when even trifling might be allowable, to trifle wisely. This, she said, was one effect of wisdom. She deemed that time wholly *spent*. in which we were engaged in idle company, or
in

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in idle conversation ; in conversing of the affairs of others, which could be neither improvement nor amusement to those who thought justly. Mrs. Neville, made use of this opportunity to point out to her children the value of improvement. To attain learning and accomplishments, she told them was desirable ; and as she provided for them the means, it became their duty to acquire all they possibly could. But she said, she wished them to consider that time the best employed, in which they were gaining knowledge that would be carried with advantage to a future life. Much of the learning they now with labour attained, would probably die with them ; or if it were necessary they should possess it hereafter, she had no doubt of their being enabled, in one moment after death, without toil, to gain it. But, she said, the proper employment of man, was to strive to form his heart,

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heart, and conform his life to the glorious pattern he had received in his blessed Redeemer, and to assist his fellow creatures in the same employment. This, she added, should be considered as the proper business, and great design of life. This was a solemn lesson ; but by Mrs. Neville, given with that sweetness and kindness, which made it as pleasing, as it was solemn. On Mathilda it had the most desirable effect ; but not so on Edgar. He had so long followed what was wrong, that he began to be strengthened in the practice of it. He was now constantly disobedient to his indulgent mother ; regardless of the unceasing pain such conduct caused her.

On the birth day of Mathilda, a little entertainment was to be given ; but the secret was kept from Edgar, to surprise him with pleasure, when he came home. The hour for his
return

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return arrived ; but with it no Edgar. A little party of their friends was assembled ; the entertainment was obliged to go on ; but alas ! there was none for Mrs. Neville, or for poor Mathilda. Their hours were clouded with sorrow by the conduct of this naughty boy ; and their uneasiness increased as the evening advanced ; lest, as he staid out very late, he should even be in danger. The time at last for separating arrived ; the young party took their leave, and afterwards, at a late hour, came Edgar. His sister ran to meet him ; told him her disappointment, and all that had passed. This adding vexation to a little shame he before felt, formed ill-humour. Mrs. Neville, received him kindly, though with much displeasure ; and desired he would immediately retire to bed. He withdrew with sullenness. — In the morning, his mother laid aside anger, hoping rather to reform by kindness.

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kindness. She inquired where he had been the preceding night. To her question she had no answer.—She represented to him all the uneasiness his absence had made her suffer. This he smiled at ; — said he was almost fifteen, old enough sure to take care of himself ; and he had been in no danger. Mrs. Neville, gently remonstrated with him on the unreasonableness of this argument ; — said, if he could guard his life ; protect his body from accidents ; and even to do so was not in his own power ; still was his mind not in danger ? That mind which would never die, was in danger of being corrupted by bad company, bad example, and bad conversation. Oh, replied Edgar, the boys I was with are not bad. You only think so, because the masters at school find fault with them ; but that is all prejudice. And in truth, he thought as he spoke ; for being accustomed

S

chiefly

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chiefly to their company, his judgement was spoiled ; he forgot what goodness was ; nor did he perceive that their conversation and manners were directly opposite to what was right. Mrs. Neville, told him that were there no other reason for disapproving of these companions, their wandering about at so late an hour, instead of being at home, making themselves happy, by adding to the comfort of their families ; this alone, would be sufficient to mark them as unfit associates for a good boy. Edgar did not give his tender mother the satisfaction of knowing that her arguments had had their proper effect, by convincing him of his error. He inwardly yielded to what she said ; but he could not sufficiently overcome himself to say he had done wrong. For a little while he avoided similar faults ; — but, then again he fell into them. Thus two or three years passed on ; Edgar
knowing

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knowing what was right, yet constantly departing from it ; the too indulgent Mrs. Neville repeating her advice, but miserable to see it was all ineffectual ; the innocent Mathilda, good herself, yet rendered unhappy by the bad conduct of her brother.

At last the time for separation came. Edgar was to engage in business. An advantageous employment was found for him in the West Indies. Thither he must go. The day of departure was a day of grief for all. Mrs. Neville and Mathilda, were overwhelmed with sorrow ; and poor Edgar suffered not less. Now every fault stood before him ; and these caused his greatest sufferings. He thought of all the unmerited and cruel pain he had given to his mother ; of all the uneasiness he had caused his sister, and the various pleasures he had withheld from her. But the time could not be recalled ;

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nor could the moment of departure be delayed; he must go. Remorse went with him, and gave a heavy addition to his grief at leaving his mother and his sister. With them remained poignant regret for losing their beloved Edgar. They regularly corresponded. The letters were mutually kind; for Edgar's heart was still tender and good. But he had not resolution in any thing to appear singular, or to *dare to be wise*. In the world, it was unavoidable that he should meet with numberless temptations. Instead of resisting, he yielded to them; and fell into various faults and follies. As passed his youth, so did his manhood. He knew what was right; and this knowledge made the practice of wrong doubly painful. Commerce succeeded with him. He became in time the father of a family. Here still his irresolution pursued him. His children acted wrong; he told them
them

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them right ; but he seemed as if he dared not to enforce that obedience he had neglected to his own parent. So even his declining years were passed in unhappiness. Had he begun life well, been obedient to good counsel in youth, and formed a habit of steadily acting according to fixed principles, it would have remained with him to his latest days ; as it was, the contrary habit of irresolution never left him. In youth he was always uneasy, because he was acting ill, and from the regret he felt for having so done ; and in old age he was still unhappy, from a consciousness of omitting various things which it was his duty to perform.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

How do you like this tale ?

ISABELLA, *and the rest.*

Very much indeed.

MRS. ABNEY.

I will acknowledge that I brought it purposely ; because I thought Edgar's example, and even Mathilda's, might be useful to you all. To some of you I must particularly point out Mathilda. You see she at first concealed from her mother, in whom she should have placed unbounded confidence, the little faults of which she knew her brother was guilty. Perhaps had she then told them, when he was only beginning to do wrong, he might have been more easily corrected. And how bitter must later have been
her

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her regret, to think that from fear of offending her brother for a moment, she had done him a prejudice which was never retrieved. When I name Edgar, my thoughts turn to Henry and Samuel. Have you ever acted as he did ?

SAMUEL.

Ah, I am sure you think of me. I fear I have ; and I am sorry that I have.

MRS. ABNEY.

Well, my love, if like him you err, like him too you have a good heart, and receive good instruction. Make then only better use than he did, of your knowledge of right. An ingenuous disposition is truly pleasing ; and I applaud you for so frankly acknowledging that you have been wrong. This gives me hope that I shall one day see you good, to the extent of my wishes.

I am

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I am so much pleased with Samuel, that I think I must now give him the drawing. Do you all join with me in presenting it to him ?

ELIZABETH.

Yes. Most cheerfully do we yield our claims to Samuel.

MRS. ABNEY.

Here is then the prize.

SAMUEL.

I think I have the honour of gaining a victory without fighting a battle.

MRS. ABNEY.

And a truly glorious victory ; for without killing any, you give life to many, by making us all happy. I wish the glory of every conqueror



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queror were as unsullied as your's is at this moment.

ELIZABETH.

You enjoy your conquest ; but I believe few would envy, or applaud you for so quiet a victory.

MRS. ABNEY.

Indeed, Elizabeth, I am sorry to say that is a true remark. So few think justly, or know in what real greatness consists, that it is generally supposed unless a victory be achieved amidst noise and bustle, the triumph is insignificant.

HENRY.

As I intend to be in the navy, I hope I shall be an admiral that I may gain glory.

T

MRS.

MRS. ABNEY.

Do you Henry? I am glad to hear that you have some desire to distinguish yourself. I suppose in short you wish to become a hero. It is first then necessary to learn in what heroism consists. I cannot think that he deserves most the appellation of a hero, who fights, conquers and kills. For surely more true greatness is shown in resisting torrents of vice, than in facing a shower of balls and powder. The last depends chiefly on strength of body, the former on strength of mind. If you desire that your name should be perpetuated, seek to gain a victory over your passions, over every vice; it may then be enrolled on high; in an immortal world, and may never die. It is to that glorious desire I would point your wishes.

CECIL

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CECILIA.

In that conquest, we too may have a share in glory.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes, my dear. Virtue is confined to no sex. It is offered alike to the attainment of men and women ; and a reward of equal magnitude will be the recompence of all whose attainments are equal in worth and in degree.

I fear I am confining you too long. You are wishing perhaps for a walk. We will all now take a walk. Remember before we meet again. You must read a great deal of history ; for I shall try your knowledge in that, when I next see you.

Exeunt.

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FIFTH

FIFTH CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA, MARIAN,
AND HENRY.

Enter SAMUEL.

CECILIA.

·**H**ERE comes our long lost companion. Our circle, Samuel, has been quite dull without you. But I hope you have been well amused in the country.

SAMUEL.

Indeed I have. My visit in Buckinghamshire has afforded me much satisfaction.

ELIZA-

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ELIZABETH.

Come, then. Give us some account of your amusements ; and thus renew your pleasure, by letting us share it.

SAMUEL.

Most willingly will I comply with that request. But I fear my accounts will give you but an imperfect notion of the curious things I have seen. Besides, farming has become my great delight ; and I have thought so much about agriculture, and conversed so much with farmers, that I fear I am become too rustick to amuse you. I wish only that I could skip over a few years of my life, that I might instantly possess, and cultivate a farm of my own. I am resolved now that my studies shall chiefly tend to agriculture ; and those classick authors will
be

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be my greatest favourites, who dwell on rustick scenes.

ELIZABETH.

Very well. I suppose, then, Virgil will stand high in your good graces. In his georgicks there are some pretty things. But let me advise you not always to follow that plan of culture for your fields, which learned writers may give, lest you should fall into blunders, similar to those of the philosopher in the fable.

SAMUEL.

I think you are disposed to be severe on the literati : and I must tell you that those gentlemen would not easily pardon sarcasm from a female.

ELIZABETH.

I really am not at all inclined to be severe
on

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on any one : but when learning is divided from wisdom, or from experience, which is sometimes the same thing, and its effects become ludicrous, it is allowable on some occasions to join in the laugh that may be excited.

SAMUEL.

Let us hear your fable ; and if that be good, I promise not even to whisper to one of our learned friends, the little value you appear to place on their scholastick acquirements.

ELIZABETH.

I will read my fable ; and I dare say it will please you all. It is a translation from the Italian.

A FABLE.

A FABLE.

A philosophick Farmer, and his Servant.

A LEARNED man of good estate,
And philosophick mind,
Had stores of science in his pate;
But was to reason blind.

A Farm was his paternal lot;
And plenty fill'd his hand.
His barns were stored, and wealth he got;
For fruitful was his land.

His faithful Frank, he call'd one day,
Who heap'd the golden grain.
Francis, said he, a better way,
I'll have you till the plain.

U

Let

Let ev'ry herb in freedom grow,
The tares and darnel too ;
Let ev'ry lowly flower blow :
This plan you must pursue.

For why this change ? was Frank's reply.
Oh, Frank, thou stupid fool !
Learn, learn the cause ; nor longer try,
To make a tyrant rule.

Yes. Tyrant corn, o'erspreads the ground,
And waves its lofty head ;
While ev'ry herb that springs around,
Dies on its native bed.

All have an equal right to share,
That life which you deny ;
And philosophick minds declare,
Your crime of blackest die.

When

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When Francis heard, he bow'd assent,
To this strange new command.
And now in-doors his time is spent ;
And weeds o'erspread the land.

Now draws the time of harvest near ;
But choak'd by pow'rful foes,
Each stalk sustains a wither'd ear,
The crop no wealth bestows.

Frank to his master comes in haste ;
Declares there is no grain.
Your crops are small ; your fields are waste ;
No stores your barns contain.

Surprised at this, he quick return'd,
The fatal cause then say.
Have storms destroy'd, or light'nings burn'd
My crops of corn and hay ?

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Oh ! master, no. Nor storms, nor blight,
Have caused your wretched fate ;
Philosophy assumed the right,
To ruin your estate.

SAMUEL

Alas ! In spite of my desire to support the philosopher's cause, I must confess that your bookish gentleman was very unwise. It needs no argument to prove his folly ; for his farm showed it too plainly.

ELIZABETH.

That is right, Samuel. You are not reluctant, then, to yield to conviction.

Enter



№ 5.

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Enter MRS. ABNEY.

MRS. ABNEY.

Good morning. I find you all seated ; so I will hasten to begin the business, or rather amusement of the day, by adjudging the prize ; and by first showing it to you. See. Here is a landcape, and a little bird on the wing. As it is the month of May, we may suppose it the cuckoo ; for in this season, this little bird never fails to welcome the return of vernal sweets. Some have supposed that it never quits our sea girt isle, but only remains torpid during the cold season. It is however more reasonable to imagine that it passes to a warmer clime at the approach of winter. Logan has written a pretty poem to the cuckoo. Two verses I recollect, and can repeat to you ; but it is all deserving your attention.

“ Hail,

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“ Hail, beauteous stranger of the wood,
“ Attendant on the spring.
“ Now Heav’n repairs thy rural seat,
“ And woods thy welcome sing.”

“ Soon as the daisy decks the green,
“ Thy certain voice we hear,
“ Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year ? ”

Are you satisfied with the offered prize to day ?

CECILIA.

Very much indeed. I hope you will propose some easy method of gaining it ; for I should like to be successful.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

I will. I give it to whoever can tell me where, in what country, books were first collected, and formed into a library. Those who have obeyed me, and have read a good deal, will easily tell this,

SAMUEL.

I dare say it was in Rome, by my favourite Romans; though I do not remember.

ELIZABETH.

I should think it was by the more elegant and refined Athenians; for they seemed to me the wisest of all people.

MRS. ABNEY.

You are both mistaken. I see you have each
of

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of you confined your reading ; one to the history of Rome, the other to that of Athens. But, Elizabeth, there was a people more wise than the Athenians ; from whom the cities of Greece borrowed much of their learning on various subjects. When the Olympick games were established, to what people was it that the inhabitants of Elis sent an embassadour, to obtain their approbation, and to consult on the rewards to be given to the conquerors ?—You are all silent.—To the Egyptians. A people not famed for their warriours, but distinguished for their love of justice, their love of peace, and love of wisdom. But now, to resume our former subject of the Library.

CECILIA.

I think a library was first built by one of the kings of Egypt, in his own palace.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

You are right. It was. Do you remember the inscription he placed over it ?

CECILIA:

No. I really do not.

MRS. ABNEY.

The appellation of the apartment destined to books was written over the entrance ; and it was, " A storehouse of remedies for the mind." Here, it might truly be said, was to be found the great panacea, or the cure for ignorance, which is the root of every ill. The curious inscription might probably be an additional inducement to persons to enter, and search for knowledge. The drawing, my dear Cecilia, is yours. I am glad you have got it ; for it is the first, I think, that has fallen to your lot.

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CBCI-

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CECILIA.

Yes. It is. And I prize it very much.

MRS. ABNEY.

Henry, you must make an effort ; otherwise, I fear, the drawings you seemed once so desirous to obtain, will all be given away from you.— Now I will tell you what I destine for the employment of this morning. I shall name different periods ; and I expect you to tell me what remarkable things were passing in the world at the times I mention, and to give some account of them. In pity to me, you must try to remember well ; for I do not wish to be the principal speaker ; and I give myself the task of relating what you omit. I begin with Cecilia. In the year of the world 2820, what memorable event happened, which to describe has employed the pen of one of the greatest poets that ever lived,

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lived, and forms the subject of one of the first epic poems that has been written in any language ?

CECILIA.

Those circumstances make it so easily known, that I am glad the answer is mine. I am sure you mean the burning of Troy.

MRS. ABNEY.

Very right. Tell me what you know on the subject.

CECILIA.

I know it was taken, and burned, after a siege of ten years.

MRS. ABNEY.

It was. Troy was a city of Phrygia, in Asia
X 2 minor.

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minor. Priam was at that time its king ; and Paris, one of his sons, commanded the Trojan fleet, which was coasting on the Peloponesian shore, when he took captive Helen, wife to Menelaus, king of Sparta. To revenge this insult, the different cities of Greece united, and attacked the city of Troy. Agamemnon, king of Argos, brother to Menelaus, was appointed generalissimo of the Grecian troops. Troy withstood this powerful siege for ten years ; and was at last taken by stratagem. The Greeks cunningly devised making a wooden horse, large enough to contain many armed men. The horse being completed, they shut up Ulysses, with many soldiers in it, and pretended to be retiring. The Trojans thinking to seize the booty the Grecians had left, took the horse within the walls of the city ; little supposing they then received the enemy. Ulysses and his
armed

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armed troops left their confinement, in the night, and made themselves masters of the city; which the Grecians then completely destroyed and burned. Thus the fair Helen, the subject of this long contest, was regained; and Troy, a city renowned for its wealth, reduced to ashes, in 2820.

CECILIA.

I wish I could have remembered this long account.

MRS. ABNEY.

You might very easily; and I almost think you could, had you tried. Now, Isabella, in 3251, what happened in Italy? An event of such importancc, that the historians pen will transmit it to latest ages. As long as this world stands, it will be recorded.

ISA-

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ISABELLA.

I believe it was in that year Romulus began the building of Rome.

MRS. ABNEY.

Quite right. What more have you to say ?

ISABELLA.

I fear my memory is not good enough to say any thing more about it.

MRS. ABNEY.

I fancy I need tell you little about Romulus ; for you must all have read accounts of him. In building the city, he took instructions from some Tuscans, whom he sent for, for that purpose. The foundation was laid in a quadrangular form ; and to the city were four gates.
The

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The Forum was the principal great building Romulus erected. He divided his city into three tribes, and fourteen regions ; and this division lasted until the reign of Augustus. After having completed the city, he passed much of his time in making laws and good regulations. But it was necessary to devise some means to bring inhabitants to these new buildings, which he had called Rome. For this purpose he invited all malefactors to take refuge here, promising that on this spot they should be protected from any law that might pursue them. Thus began, in the year 3251, that city which became afterwards the capital of the greatest empire in the universe.

SAMUEL.

May Romulus be called a *great man* ?

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

I hardly know whether we may justly call him so ; for his history is involved in so much uncertainty, that we remain doubtful even of the things that are related of him. Romulus had undoubtedly great abilities; and that he did good is undeniable ; for he collected those whose crimes had banished them from mankind, and formed them into a band of citizens, which under his government made a useful and peaceful society. That was certainly doing a great good.

SAMUEL.

Might not our colony at Botany Bay, succeed in a similar manner ?

MRS. ABNEY.

It were desirable it should. But I fear there
is

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was a valiant and able monarch, and had begun that career of success and triumph, which Alexander completed. His conquests were almost unbounded ; yet not equal to his ambition. He extended his empire from the Hellespont to the Indies, subduing every country he went through. And after a short life, passed amidst war and tumult, he died in Babylon, in 3680, of a fever, the consequence of excess in drinking. With him ended this wide empire ; for having named no successour, his captains, who had so large a share in obtaining his conquests, divided his empire between them. Now, what person who looks back on the life of Alexander, would not prefer, could he be in a similar situation, to render his name eminent by virtues, rather than like him eminent by conquests. Wonder, 'tis true, hangs on the name of Alexander ; but it is astonishment without admiration.

The

FIFTH CONVERSATION. 171

The answer to the next question is your's, Henry. What great loss did Africa sustain, in the year of the world 3858?

HENRY,

I knew some of the other answers ; but that question is so difficult, I cannot answer it.

MRS. ABNEY,

Oh, you idle boy ! Had I tried you with the others, I fear I should have had the same reply. At that time Africa lost a most splendid and wealthy republick ; for in 3858 Rome overcame her powerful rival, Carthage. This superb city, founded by Dido, was at last levelled to the ground by the Romans, under the command of Publius Scipio. The Romans had learned from Carthage herself that art which enabled them to subdue her ; for wholly ignorant of maritime af-

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fairs,

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fairs, and of ship building, they first made themselves masters of that art by observing the construction of a Carthaginian vessel that was wrecked on the coast of Italy. The first use they made of the knowledge they thus obtained, was to defeat the Carthaginian fleet. This gave a considerable check to the power of Carthage, but did not satisfy Rome ; who, more ambitious than generous, aimed at her total ruin. The Romans, therefore, soon after, made a descent on the coast of Africa ; and after a siege of five years, left the Carthaginians to deplore the entire destruction of their city. Dissension, and the love of luxury, the frequent causes of the overthrow both of kingdoms and of families, occasioned the downfall of Carthage. For had she been less engrossed with her riches, and her senate more united, she might long have resisted her powerful enemy. Such however, is the fate
of

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of all human grandeur. It blazes for a time, but its light is quickly extinguished.

Now I turn to Samuel. What remarkable event happened in Rome, in 3960?

SAMUEL.

Oh, every body must know that. Poor Julius Cesar, was killed in the senate.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am glad to find you know it. Now, in compassion to me, who have been speaking a great while, tell us what you know about Cesar's death.

SAMUEL.

The power of Cesar had become so great by his wonderful conquests in Gaul, that Rome herself began to fear him; and when he petitioned for a second consulship, instead of having
his

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his petition granted he was ordered to disband his army, and to return as a private citizen. Too ambitious to comply with this, he resolved to obtain by force, what was refused to his petition. He entered, therefore, Rome, at the head of his troops ; and soon was he created both consul and dictator. He then marched into Thessaly, and entirely defeated Pompey, who opposed him with a powerful army. After this he was victorious over Scipio and Juba, in Africa, and over the sons of Pompey in Spain. He then returned triumphant to Rome ; where the senate and people united in honouring him with the titles of *father of his country*, and *perpetual dictator*. But these honours and titles were of short continuance ; for he had not long possessed the supreme authority, when he was assassinated in the senate. He fell at the foot of Pompey's statue. What added peculiar odium
to

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to the conspiracy, was, that Brutus and Cassius, two of Cesar's particular friends, were amongst the principal conspirators.

MRS. ABNEY.

We all thank you, Samuel. You have related this to us very clearly, and very well. Now remains my little Marian's question. If she cannot reply, I will readily excuse her, as she has not had so many years to read as the rest. What is it that particularly distinguishes the year 4004?—Must I give your answer?

MARIAN.

If you please.

MRS. ABNEY.

This memorable era is distinguished by the birth of our blessed Saviour; who was born into the

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the world four thousand years after its creation. The Roman empire, that had long breathed nothing but war, was now enjoying the blessings of peace, under the equitable and mild reign of Augustus. His power carried peace and happiness as far as it extended. For clemency, for justice, in fine for every virtue, Augustus has been almost unequalled. And his generous encouragement of all arts and sciences gained him universal admiration. It was subject to this great, and good monarch, that our Saviour condescended to be born. And his birth gives a lustre and glory to this reign, of which no other reign can boast.

I am not willing to suppose that you have any of you been wearied to day; for undoubtedly more true pleasure is to be found in the page of history, than in that of fiction; and I would wish you all to think so.

ELIZA-

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MRS. ABNEY.

I applaud your good resolutions. Be steadfast to them. As the day is cloudy, and you will probably none of you be inclined to walk, will you have any objection that I should read a story, which I brought to entertain you ? But it is long. Will none of you, do you think, be tired ; not even my little Marian ?

MARIAN.

I am sure I shall not.

ELIZABETH.

Nor will any of us, my dear madam. We shall all listen with pleasure.

MRS. ABNEY.

Then I will begin.

A TALE.

A T A L E.

MRS. ABNEY, *reads.*

WHEN Memnon reigned in Egypt, he conceived the plan of making his successour a great warriour, that he might by conquest extend his dominions. Until this period, Egypt had loved justice too well, to delight in war. And though she maintained an army of four hundred thousand men, it was not to molest her neighbours, but merely to defend her own peculiar territory. Memnon, to effect the plan he had projected, issued an order, the day his son was born, that every male in his kingdom, born that day, should be brought to court, there to be educated with the young prince. In obedience to
this

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this mandate, one thousand seven hundred infant children were brought to the palace. Memnon received them all. His plan was, to give the young prince Sesostris, and all these children, a military education. He hoped by bringing them up with his son, to make them attached to him ; and that the young prince would later find them faithful friends, and able captains, zealous in his service. In various situations were the families of these children. Some were of very obscure birth ; some were the sons of military men ; many the offspring of different mechanicks ; and a great many the children of peasants. All were brought up together, all treated alike, and all like the young prince. They had the same instructors ; were all educated in the same hardy, plain, and simple manner ; inured alike to those hardships and that fatigue, to which later they would be exposed
in

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in a military life. At the same time they had the best instruction in every respect; for the Egyptians, who excelled in wisdom, were particularly exact in the education of youth. Early were they taught to be attentive to religion, to respect the various duties of society, and to be masters of every art and science that could adorn the human character. In Egypt, even in the lowest situations, it was thought inexcusable to be ignorant of religion, or of the laws of the country; and in the more elevated ranks of life, the knowledge of these subjects was pursued with the strictest attention.

In the numerous school to which the young Sesostriſ belonged, as the students were all treated and instructed in the same manner, the only difference between them was that which disposition made;—but here was a striking difference; for as leaves on the same tree are all dissimilar,
thus

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ELIZABETH.

I can answer for myself ; and I believe I may say for the rest of the company, that each one has been quite well entertained.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am glad to hear it. Next time I promise you a longer conversation. While the days are so fine, the weather so inviting to enjoy the fresh air, and to admire the beauties of nature, I am unwilling to detain you long in the house. So let us hasten to take a walk.

Exeunt.

Z

SIXTH

SIXTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, SAMUEL, AND HENRY.

MRS. ABNEY.

I HAVE fixed on this day to enjoy the company of all my young friends, because I recollected it was Samuel's birth day ; and I wished in person to offer him my congratulations, and best wishes. I am sure, my dear, you know how anxiously I desire that each year should be to you replete with comforts. And, to borrow the thought of an Italian author, I will tell you that I earnestly wish that the lustre of your merits may be clear and bright as the sun ; while your virtue is in an equal degree unspotted and pure. I hope I

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shall

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shall never rejoice alone on the anniversaries of this time ; but that every one, as far as the knowledge of you extends, will have cause to bless the day which gave you birth. That this may be the case, you must not pass a life of idleness, in any sense of the expression ; for virtue, any more than knowledge of any kind, is not to be attained without persevering diligence, and even some degree of laborious assiduity. But surely you cannot think any pains too much to bestow in gaining what through endless ages you will rejoice to have acquired.

SAMUEL.

No surely. And I really am not now idle. Since the beginning of the year I even, find myself more inclined to be diligent. I really wish to learn, and to improve and be good ; and I promise you, to take all the pains possible in every thing.

MRS.

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thus varied is mankind, in countenance, body, and mind. The young prince was every thing that could be desired ; good, studious, mild and reasonable. Two in the school he chose for his more particular associates ; Alcander and Cosroe. Alcander joined to quickness of intellects, and great abilities, so much life and spirit in conversation, that by all he was acknowledged the most pleasant of companions. Cosroe had more sedateness, more composure ; but so accurately did he conceive every thing, and possessed a judgement so just, that he was a desirable friend to all who could value goodness. These two, though so different, were particularly attracted together, and even joined in close friendship, by being both the chosen and favourite companions of Sesostris. They both pursued learning with considerable success ; though Alcander was sometimes obliged to yield the advantage of supe-

A a riority

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riority to his friend. They studied together ; and were equally well versed, in arithmetick, geometry and astronomy ; sciences which were first known to the Egyptians, and by them taught to the rest of the world. Chaldea alone has disputed with Egypt the honour of having first attended to astronomy.

Oratory was particularly studied in this school ; but it was not that flowery eloquence practised by the Athenians. The Egyptian oratory consisted in that nervous, strong language, which made truth be impressed with force on all hearers.

Cosroe, though his attainments in knowledge were very considerable, had all that modesty, diffidence and humility, the sure attendants of merit. His father was a low mechanick, residing at Kopatos, a city near to Hecatompylos. He rejoiced in every leisure hour to visit his family, who were laborious and poor, and to assist them with the bounties

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bounties which his sovereign bestowed on him. Widely different was Alcander. He was the only son of a poor shepherd who lived beyond Syene; and so doatingly fond of him was his father, that frequently would he come to Memphis to have the pleasure of seeing his child. But so ridiculous was the vanity of Alcander, that he was ashamed to see his poor aged father, amidst the splendour of the court. The education he was receiving, and the favour he enjoyed, filled him with pride. He did not reflect that a virtuous mind, though imprisoned in a body that might be clothed in rags, was great in the eyes of Heaven.

At length the studies of Sesostris and his companions were completed; and completed with honour and advantage to many. But Alcander made a bad use of the learning he had been attaining. Vanity engaged his attention; his ears were

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deaf to the cry of the poor and the oppressed. His understanding and his reason, instead of being usefully exercised, were employed in vain, curious, and unprofitable inquiries. He was quite regardless of directing these noble endowments to the service of that power by whom they were bestowed. Memory, that wonderful faculty, he merely used to preserve the remembrance of injuries, and of hurtful conversation, which all youth are sometimes exposed to hear; instead of employing it to treasure up good advice and good precepts, which would have preserved him from ill. Too precipitate in acting, to regard that most useful monitor, conscience, he heeded not her censures, nor ever strove to gain her approbation. Careless of the faculty of speech, it served him not simply to express his thoughts, and do good to his friends;—his words were often useless, superabundant, and not expressive of the real
senti-

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sentiments of his heart. Time he wasted. Had he stopped one moment to add up the number of hours thrown away in eating, drinking, sleeping and recreations, he would have found a most insignificant portion remaining for useful occupations ; and even that small portion he employed not properly. In contemplating the heavens, in observing the wonderful beauty and order that reigned amidst the luminous bodies, he looked not down with humility on himself, as on an insignificant creature, unworthy to be surrounded with so much perfection, no ;—he gloried that he understood the science of astronomy ; that he could trace out the ways of the planets ; and see order, where, to an ignorant observer appeared nothing but confusion. When he saw many around him poor, and as he thought ignorant, they excited his derision ; and he said to himself, “ I am in a different situation, because

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cause I deserve it better." Not once did he reflect that life was a mere state of trial ; and that those whom he now contemned would perhaps, in a future world, receive a reward denied to him, because they made a good use of the small talent they received, while he abused the larger one that was his portion. Thus thoughtless, Alcander was often cruel ; merciless to his attendants, and pitiless to his horses, which he drove without compassion in racing, a favourite amusement with the Egyptians. Having learned oratory according to the custom in Egypt, though he would often idly waste words, he never deliberately maintained a falsehood ; but even here he was wrong ; he was *proud* that whenever he chose to argue, he could force conviction on his hearers. Possessed of health, vigour and youth, he did not adore that bountiful providence that had thus blessed him, nor
consider

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consider those blessings as spring flowers, pleasing, but quickly fading. He could not persuade himself that sickness would ever overtake him; and death he thought a most distant object. That wealth which the liberality of his prince bestowed on him, he employed in personal gratifications; in indulging himself in all luxuries. He knew not that most noble use of wealth, the relief of indigence, and of oppressed merit. He valued himself merely on being the companion of Sesostris; he sought not by his greatness to be a conspicuous example of goodness; nor by his power to strike terrour in vice, and to shelter virtue. No. He supposed by being rich and great his reputation was so fully established, that it was not possible for it to be blemished in the eyes of the world. Being skilled in learning, he fondly imagined himself raised, as it were on a throne, above all inferiour
to

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to him in knowledge ; and that he was justified in looking down on others with contempt.

Such was Alcander, one of the companions of the intelligent and good Sesostris ; and such is the generality of youth in a similar situation of prosperity. Cosroe was in every respect different. Good and humble as he was learned, he still remained the friend of Alcander from the benevolent hope of reclaiming him.

It was now appointed by Memnon that the prince should make his first campaign, in a war against the Arabs. Many of his youthful companions were at this time captains in his service ; amongst the rest Alcander and Cosroe. Sesostris, with Cosroe, and many others of his captains, who from the day they left the school had never slackened of the strict rules in which they had been educated, bore hunger, thirst, and fatigue ; and scarcely felt them as hardships ; while Alcander,

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cander, and some others, who had been yielding to dissipation, felt even their health injured by the toil of long marches, and the fatigue of arms. Sesostris was successful. He overcame the unconquered Arabs ; and returned to his country, deserving and receiving every military honour.

Memnon pleased with this youthful essay of his son, now sent him against Lybia; which being contiguous to Egypt, the conquest of it appeared desirable to the ambition of Memnon. Here Sesostris was not less successful. He subdued the greatest part of Lybia, which became subject to Egypt.

Alcander, who had not recovered from the toils of the late war, was quite overwhelmed with the fatigues of this excursion. That strength and health which he once thought were never to be shaken, now gave way to sickness ; and, on his return to Memphis, a severe illness made him

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think death not so distant as he once imagined. It was, however, the will of providence that from this attack of disease he should recover. His confinement gave him leisure to reflect; and the benevolent Cosroe lost no opportunity of giving his friend good advice. Indeed reflection, and the counsel of Cosroe, were not less serviceable in restoring Alcander's mind to virtue, than the art of physick, so happily practised in Egypt, was useful in restoring health to his body. Again capable of acting, his first determination was to quit the army, to quit the court, and to retire; he cared not whither, so that it were distant from vice. He said he knew his own weakness; that it was incapable of resisting bad example. Of this plan Cosroe disapproved. Gratitude to his sovereign, he told him, who had placed him in his present situation, claimed a different conduct; and he recommended that he
should

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would rather aim at such a degree of virtue as would, with the assistance of Heaven, enable him resist temptation.

Alexander, who had learned distrust of himself, readily submitted to be directed by his friend. Cosroe availed himself of the power he now had, to guide him to all good. He counselled Alexander not to abandon his prince, nor his profession; but yet he strongly advised that at a time he should quit the court, and seek to repair his health by quietude and change of scene.

The good Cosroe made use of the same opportunity gently to remonstrate with his friend of the various follies he had lately fallen into; and counselled him to take equal care in the reformation of his mind, as in that of his health. Alexander promised a faithful observance of all he said; and having taken leave of the young prince,

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prince, and bid adieu to his kind friend, he in a few days quitted Memphis. His father was the first object of his attention, when he left the city. He wished by an increase of duty and affection, to repair the faults he had formerly been guilty of, in his slights and want of respect to his parent. Accordingly, towards Syene was his course first bent. Joy filled his heart when he approached the plain where he knew his father was accustomed to tend his little flock. A youth, sitting carelessly playing on a flagelet, held now his place. Alcander hastened to inquire for his aged father. Alas ! he was no more ! The youth said that his spirit had, a few weeks since, flown to brighter regions ; and that he himself had performed his funeral rites, as he had no child, nor near relative to do those duties for him. That good old shepherd, he added, was bowed down with age, but seemingly still more oppressed.

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pressed with some untold affliction, under which he had probably sunk.

Oh! ye, who have hearts to feel, think what must have been the condition of Alcander at this recital. His father no more; and *be* no doubt the cause of his death being imbittered and hastened.—For a short time he was speechless.—Then, recovering,—in an agony of grief he exclaimed; thou justly offended Deity, wreck not thy vengeance upon me at once. I have deserved thy wrath; but I am too wicked to appear in thy presence. Suffer me yet to live; and give me strength to bear whatever thou ordainest.—Then his thoughts turned to other objects. He remembered his friends. Oh! all ye, he exclaimed, who, like me, have been deficient in filial duty, look at me; see the sufferings of my heart; and hasten to repair your faults, while your parents yet live, while time is yet allowed you. He

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He continued in Syene a few days ; deploring his loss, and giving free vent to his grief. In this spot, all reminded him of his father ; — each bleating sheep, each tender lamb, brought to his recollection the innocence in which he had passed his days. He lamented his own lot, to have been sent to a city, to know a court, and to be acquainted with vice. But these regrets were vain ; and, though with a heavy heart, he determined to pursue his journey. Like most born in Egypt, Alcander was too partial to his native land, to desire to roam further. He contented himself with admiring the various perfections which art and nature had lavished on this fertile country, rendered equally beautiful and fruitful by the waters of the overflowing Nile. Near to Syene he stopped to remark a well, by which the Egyptians discovered the period of the summer solstice. After having noticed

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noticed this well, he went to Thebes ; famed for her hundred gates, for the amazing extent of the city, and for its magnificence and grandeur. Its buildings were spacious and splendid. All, in Egypt, the mind of man, and all it conceived, architecture, sculpture, musick, all was noble, elevated, sublime. Indeed, every Egyptian work, though made with mortal hands, seemed as it were stamped with immortality ; so solid, so durable was it made. The pyramids of Egypt, the obelisks, have been the admiration of every age.

Alcander, after passing much time in Thebes, went to Cynopolis ; and there joined in the worship of the God Anubis, which was a dog. It was truly wonderful to see a people so wise, give such proofs of weakness, in thus adoring beasts as deities. Alcander now proceeded to Arsinöe. He had here two wonderful objects to
contem-

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contemplate ; the lake Meris, and the famous palace called the Labyrinth, built on the borders of this lake. The Labyrinth was a most stupendous edifice. It contained fifteen hundred rooms, which were arranged round four large halls. The subterraneous buildings were equal in number and extent, to those above ground. These buildings were intended as sepulchres for the Egyptian kings, and were likewise allotted for the keeping of the crocodiles, which were also considered gods in Egypt.

The extent of the lake Meris, so called from the name of the king who made it, is almost incredible. Its circumference was said to be five hundred and forty miles. To prove that this lake was a work of art, and not of nature, two pyramids were placed in its centre ; on which were too statues, or colosses ; the one of Meris, the other of his queen. The elevation of these
statues

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statues was six hundred feet ; three hundred the waters covered, and three hundred rose above the waters. This lake was not useless to the country ; for the fishing produced a considerable revenue.

Alcander, as he proceeded up the country, did not pass through Memphis ; he left it on one side ; but he visited Grand Cairo, and many of the other cities of Egypt. When he reached Canopus, a city which was on a small island, he stopped there, and particularly observed the temple of Serapis, another Egyptian deity. Zoan, once the capital of Egypt, he did not pass unnoticed ; nor yet the island of Pharos, on which was a tower that served as a light-house. Alcander now proceeded along the coast, and then took his journey south, by the banks of the Red Sea. Among the mountains near this shore, were the quarries of Egyptian marble, so famed

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and esteemed by the ancients. Alcander left nothing unexamined that was worthy of attention. He was no longer vain, superficial, and conceited. He now saw, and with regret saw—for his thirst for useful knowledge was insatiable—that even the life of man was too short to attain half the learning which an Almighty power had given him capacity to acquire. And he equally well knew that he was surrounded with various things, the effects of which he felt, though he was not able to comprehend the causes that produced them. The consideration of all this, taught him that lesson of humility, that good, that useful lesson, which should be learned by all.

Alcander now returned to Memphis; but not as he left it; his health was improved, and his mind not less amended. He found Sesostris, his former friend and companion,
wearing

wearing the Egyptian crown ; for Memnon was dead. At court, and by every friend, Alcander was welcomed with joy ; for the change which reflection had made in him, was visible to all. The good Sesostris, no way elated by regal dignity, knew how to value worth in every station. He still loved Alcander ; and desired to have him, and Cosroe, as before, for his frequent companions. And these deserving friends, more happy in the esteem of such a man, than flattered because they enjoyed royal favour, rejoiced in every opportunity to attend him. They were constantly his companions ; in his amusements, and in his devotions. Alcander was much pleased in being present at a scene he had never before witnessed ; the king's attendance in the temple. Each morning with the dawn, Sesostris arose ; and before he entered on other employments, he repaired to the temple, attended by

his courtiers. There, while the victims were yet before the altar, the priest addressed the Gods in a prayer, to which the king listened with devout attention. He prayed that the Gods would endow the sovereign with every virtue ; make him devout to Heaven, mild with his fellow creatures ; moderate, just, equitable, sincere, and master of his own passions ; that he might be enabled to discern virtue, and to reward it with an exalted recompense ; that vice he might also discover, but be lenient in its punishment. The priest then proceeded to enumerate those faults it was possible a king should commit ; but at the same time supposing that if they were guilty of them, it was only accidentally or from ignorance. He then called for curses on each minister that should give his sovereign bad counsel. The sacrifices were then made. And after these, the priest read different lessons, from some of
their

their holy books ; and then the worthy actions done by their former great monarchs ; that thus the king might, by taking his good predecessors for examples, be able to govern his people with equity, and render his subjects and himself happy. This was the method of instructing the kings of Egypt. It was established by an Egyptian sovereign, and it was never departed from. When they went to the temple, and in every solemn procession, a band of musick always attended. The Egyptians were not pleased with those light, trifling airs, which merely amuse the fancy ; they delighted in that noble, sublime musick, which seems to touch the heart, and raise the very soul above this sublunary world.

Sesostris, who had been educated for arms, delighted too much in a military life. Ethiopia, and many other countries became tributary to him. In India he even pursued his conquests
further

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further than did afterwards, the conquering Alexander. Cosroe, and Alcander also who thought justly on most subjects, disapproved of the conduct of Sesostris in this respect; and they grieved to see their sovereign, who was in most things, a distinguished example of goodness, so misguided sometimes by vanity and ambition, that he would suffer his chariot to be drawn by captive princes. Thus frail is humanity in its best form; for few have exceeded Sesostris in wisdom and goodness.

So fearful was Alcander of again departing from virtue, that he dreaded even to approach the borders of vice. He wished now to refrain altogether from wine, because formerly he had been led into excess. But Cosroe suffered him not to do this. He represented to him that in some cases, there might be greater merit in the moderate enjoyment of pleasure, than in the refusal

fusal of what the Gods had intended for the use of man. Thus did Alcander, suffering himself to be guided by a kind and judicious friend, daily correct some fault ; and in this manner he passed through life ; rejoicing in the thought that he was striving to do well. This conduct gained him the approbation of his own heart, and the deserved applause of all his friends ; in which he found undescribable happiness. Cosroe too had his reward ;—he found it in the sincerity of Alcander's friendship ; and in the heart felt satisfaction of having reclaimed a fellow creature who was on the brink of destruction, and in having brought him back to virtue, and to a life of felicity.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Now tell me which of you is best pleased with these good friends, and which of you have Alcander and Cosroe wearied?

ELIZABETH.

I, for one, am not wearied. I admire good Cosroe, who could so long be patient with Alcander, and correct him of so many follies.

MRS. ABNEY.

He deserves admiration. And I recommend to you, to imitate him. You may not have it in your power to do good so largely. But when you perceive little foibles in any one of your young companions, bear with them kindly, and strive gently to point them out, that your friend may correct them,

CECI-

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CECILIA.

I was sorry for poor Alcander, that he could not again see his aged father.

MRS. ABNEY.

Ah! he was then to be pitied. Remember always the advice he gave, in the moment of his grief and disappointment; not to omit the performance of any duty, while time is yet allowed you.

SAMUEL.

Is it possible that there should have been such a prodigious lake as that of Meris? and so spacious a palace as the labyrinth?

MRS. ABNEY.

Historians tell us so; and indeed I believe some parts of the labyrinth may still be seen. The ruins, I think, yet remain.

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SAMU-

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SAMUEL.

I fancy the architect of Somerset-house must have had the labyrinth in his mind when he planned that building ; for I have heard that there the subterraneous apartments resemble those above ground.

MRS. ABNEY.

If so, possibly he had. For modern artists, of all descriptions, are great copiers of the ancients.

ISABELLA.

You mentioned the quarries of marble as very curious. Are any of the chimney pieces we now see, made of that marble.

MRS. ABNEY.

I believe not, for it is now both scarce, and very valuable. There is a kind of marble, in proper

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properly called Egyptian, of a dark green colour, and spotted with grey ; but that comes from the coast of Genoa. The real Egyptian marble is sea green, mixed with streaks of white, or paler green.

HENRY.

It was very shocking in Sesostris, to have his chariot drawn by captive kings.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes, All cruelty is detestable. An inhuman boy who tortures dogs, and other animals, is in some measure as criminal ; for he is cruel as far as he has power. And it is to be feared such a boy, had he dominion over men, would not more respect the feelings of his fellow creatures.

D d 2

MARI-

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MARIAN.

Was it not very silly to suppose that a dog was a god, and to worship him?

MRS. ABNEY.

It was. But my little Marian will know later, that there is no folly, however ridiculous, that man is not liable to fall into, unless Almighty God condescend to be his guide and director. It is growing late, and we have not yet thought of the prize. Who gets it? How shall we try for it?

HENRY.

Oh, give it to me without a trial; for I know I shall not win it.

SAMUEL.



No. 6.

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SAMUEL.

No, no. Henry. That will not be fair.

MRS. ABNEY.

No more it will. I should no longer deserve to be president in this assembly, if I were thus to adjudge the reward, before merit is proved. Come. Whoever can tell me in what year of the world Sesostris began his reign, shall have it.

ELIZABETH.

Then I get the prize; for I remember reading, in the ancient history, that it was in the year 3033.

MRS. ABNEY.

Quite right. So here is the drawing. Now, my children, receive my tenderest farewell. I shall rejoice when my next leisure day gives me another opportunity of visiting you.

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SEVENTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, HENRY, AND SAMUEL.

MRS. ABNEY.

COME. One of our former plans for gaining the prize, I renew to day ; and give the drawing to that one who can best define for me Emulation and Envy. Tell me, each of you, what you suppose they are ; and then how far you think them desirable dispositions.

CECILIA.

I dare say I cannot explain them properly ; for I have often heard emulation praised as a
virtue ;

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virtue ; and yet it always appears to me that emulation and envy are just the same. Therefore, when I am learning musick, or drawing, or any other thing, I try to do as well as I can, without thinking of any one else ; for surely if I desired to do better than another, I should be envious and ill-natured.

MRS. ABNEY.

Not so at all, my dear. To aspire at perfection the most exalted, is but right. And to attain excellence in any performance, you must strive to do better than the best performer. It is also quite possible that this desire of excellence should be free from the least grain of ill-nature.

HENRY.

I agree with my sister, that every body is ill-natured who strives to do better than others. I
know

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know I was very angry with the boy, in our French class, who got the prize I had been trying for. And I remember telling him I would take care not to be in the class with him, after the holydays. He was so kind, and so sorry that I was disappointed, that I thought, afterwards, I had been ill-natured.

MRS. ABNEY.

And so, truly, I think. But you will observe that you there showed an envious disposition ; for you were not content to strive to excel yourself ; but the superiority and happiness of another, gave you uneasiness ; and willingly would you have taken from that boy, both his merit, and the reward it had obtained.

ELIZABETH.

How we all differ ! I have ever thought emu-

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lation

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lation a most useful and desirable qualification. I am certain I never improved so much in musick, as since I strove to play as well as my cousin. And yet I always rejoiced in the progress she made. The other day, when she was playing Clementi's lessons so well, and in such good time, and every body seemed so much pleased, and was praising her, I felt as happy as if those praises had been bestowed on me.

MRS. ABNEY.

I see you know from experience the good effect of emulation. And I make no doubt that your mind is too generous ever to admit mean spirited envy. — But I do not like this round about way of giving definitions. I propose a question ; but not one gives me a direct answer. Come, Samuel, let us see how you will succeed.

SAMUEL.

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SAMUEL.

I fear, not better than the others. Indeed, I despair of doing it at all, in words ; so I wish I had a pencil ; I would then draw my answer. Emulation should be a figure, young and happy, with several companions in a group, endeavouring to catch a laurel crown, hung at a very great height above her head ; while Envy, a little, ugly cross creature, should be just going to give Emulation a great push, and at the same time wishing that the crown would drop down upon her.

MRS. ABNEY.

Well done, Samuel. That is not exactly the answer I required ; and yet I must excuse you in favour of the fanciful, yet really just drawing you have made me, of emulation and envy.—What has Isabella to say ?

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ISABELLA.

I think Samuel's drawing has driven my thought out of my head ; and I am now better able to explain despair, than either of the subjects proposed. For I *despair* of saying any thing more just than he has done, respecting emulation or envy.

MRS. ABNEY.

That is a very pretty excuse. But my dear Isabella must not thus cheat me, for the future, of her explanations. Now, Marian, what is your thought ?

MARIAN.

I will wait, and hear yours ; and that shall direct mine.

MRS. ABNEY.

A very good answer ; expressive of an humble

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ble mind ; such as I hope you will always retain. I could not expect a long definition from you, at present. And remember always, that humility gives lustre to knowledge, and procures indulgence for ignorance. Now it remains for me to give my answer ; and to put Samuel's drawing into words. I think Emulation is a desire of excelling, and surpassing another, in any perfection, and proceeds from a nobleness of mind, and an anxiety to do well. Envy is also a desire of rivalling another ; but it is a desire mixed with malice and ill-will ; and is always produced by a meanness of spirit, and a corrupt heart. The first is certainly laudable ; and I recommend, to each of you, to cherish it most constantly ; the latter is despicable ; and I hope every one, whose bosom it has ever entered, will banish it for ever, and far away ; while those who have never felt it, will
care-

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carefully guard from admitting into their breasts so malicious a guest. I think Samuel has the best title to the prize. What is the general opinion ?

CECILIA.

Each one would wish to have it ; but I believe we must yield the claim of merit to Samuel.

MRS. ARNEY.

Receive then this drawing of a delicate little goldfinch. And look around you. You have the pleasure of seeing every one rejoicing in your recompense. So no envy is here.

SAMUEL.

I am much obliged to you ; and to Cecilia and the rest, who so kindly yield to me, what they equally deserve.

MRS.



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MRS. ABNEY.

Would you like now to pass half an hour as usual, in hearing a tale ?

SAMUEL.

Oh, if you please. I hope only it is as amusing as that about Alcander.

MRS. ABNEY.

I think it will entertain you as well.

MARIAN.

But will it be true ? I should like all the stories better, if they were but true.

MRS. ABNEY.

My dear Marian, what I told you in the last story, about Sesostris, and the lake of Meris, and a great deal more, was true, I assure you. Now attend to this, and tell me what you think of it.

A TALE.

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learning of these fair students should render them pedantick ; for Mr. Seymour made them drink deep of that spring which is only dangerous by being simply tasted. These young women read Latin authors with ease and fluency ; they understood Greek ; and knew Hebrew sufficiently well to read many parts of scripture in the language of the inspired penmen. Their mother took also her part in their education ; and suffered not her children to be ignorant of musick, drawing, and other pleasing accomplishments. Miss Seymours, as might be expected, being the offspring of such parents, were both good and clever. All their acquaintance delighted in their society. They all loved virtue ; and each one made her happiness to centre in the performance of her duty ;—still there was so striking a difference between them, in their various dispositions, that by their friends they
were

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were constantly distinguished by the appellations of the Cardinal virtues. Miss Bridget, the eldest, had always the name of *Justice*; Christian, that of *Prudence*; Wilhelmina was called *Temperance*; and Margaret, *Fortitude*. These names were truly descriptive of the characters of these sisters; and the predominant disposition of each one seemed to strengthen with her years. Many who saw this family were inclined to say, "sure here are rare instances that mortals may be without fault." But the more discerning eye saw otherwise. They were all good, yet each one wanted some share of the virtues of the rest. One of Miss Seymour's favourite companions was Alicia, the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman. Alicia was pleasing and good; but her goodness was not built on a foundation so stable, as was that of her friends. Her father had for some years been a widower.

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He proposed now a second marriage ; and this highly displeased his daughter ; who from the death of her mother, had born absolute, though still gentle sway in the house. She related her trouble to her friends. Fortitude.—We will distinguish Miss Seymours by these appellations, —strongly saw, or thought she saw the cause Alicia had for sorrow ; but she advised her to bear grief firmly, and not to suffer it to impair her health, or interrupt her peace. Justice, who quickly discerned how wrong Alicia was, thus to complain unreasonably of a parent so uniformly kind and good, severely condemned her friend. Temperance strove to moderate her sorrow, by pointing out the good qualities the lady possessed, with whom Alicia was likely to be connected ; while Prudence counselled her wholly to conceal, if she could not suppress her feelings of regret ; as the expression of them
would

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would undoubtedly imbitter her future life, with her mother in law. Still Alicia continued to repine, and even so warmly to show her resentment, that her health, which was tender, suffered considerably by her violence on this occasion. Her father married ; and she continued the same conduct. Justice, who weighed the actions and the words of her friend in her unerring scale, found the balance heavy against Alicia ; yet she feared to offend, by telling her opinion. Fortitude, who stood by, had resolution to make known her sister's sentiments ;—she explained them with plainness, and even rigid severity. Truth, when thus told, is commonly too harsh for the ears of weak mortals. Had it been tempered with mildness, it might possibly have had good effect. But Alicia was offended ; and she wholly withdrew from the society of Bridget and Margaret. The first, who was ever
deaf

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deaf to self love, and judged herself with the same impartiality she used towards others, now severely condemned the rigidity with which she had judged her friend ;— but it was too late ;— Alicia's friendship had received a wound, not easily healed. Justice felt her own loss, in the deprivation of her friend's company. Fortitude bore this deprivation with firmness, though she felt it with even additional force. Prudence, who wisely saw that her words would not correct Alicia, forebore speaking at present ;— she waited for the period when reason might resume that place in her mind which passion now held. Temperance, ever gentle, sometimes mildly condemned, sometimes with equal moderation approved, and by this manner preserved peace with all.—Miss Seymours conduct in regard to Alicia, was a true example of their manner of acting in every instance. Could the virtues of
all,

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all, have been united in one, the union might have formed a perfect character;—as it was, in each one there was a deficiency.—With respect to Alicia, she continued to act wrong; and her violence was so great, that her health was undermined, and a rapid decline was the consequence. Thus did Alicia fall a victim in early life, to ungoverned passions. This was a severe trial to the Miss Seymours. The loss of the favoured companion of their youth, they keenly felt. Justice regretted her as a friend who possessed numberless good qualities, though they were sullied with some faults; and her grief was aggravated by her condemnation of herself, for having too severely judged her friend, without sufficient allowance for the frailty of humanity. Prudence had foreseen Alicia's end approaching; and had previously armed herself with courage, to bear the impending trouble.

Tempe-

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Temperance, moderate in grief, as in joy, bedewed her friends grave with the tear of heart felt sorrow ; but passed not her days in unavailing woe. She looked forward, with hope, to that period, when, from the mercy of her Almighty judge, she might possibly renew her friendship in a brighter world. Fortitude, strong in all her feelings, grieved with violence ; but bore her grief with such firmness, that the world on this occasion, as on many others, doubted of the tenderness of her heart.

Until the death of Mr. Seymour, his daughters continued to live with him ; but when this event took place, and another rector took possession of the living, and of the parsonage house, they quitted their native village ; and the city of York became their residence. Their characters were too much formed to change with circumstances. In their intercourse with
the

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the world, which was now considerably enlarged, they still preserved the peculiar characteristics of their youth. But they were not beloved in the world, as from their merit they deserved to be. Temperance was the most universal favourite. Justice too frequently brought before her tribunal the actions and the words of mankind ; which seldom bear, with advantage, a strict scrutiny. She found reason to disapprove of most of her associates ; and her own words, which were always the pure dictates of her heart, untinctured with flattery, were seldom grateful, or well received. Thus Justice, though truly a noble character, deaf to self interest and self love, equitable, upright, incapable of prejudice or partiality, was too commonly feared, and even hated ; except by the more worthy few, who knew and approved her merit, though unadorned with the graces she might have possessed.

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essed.

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sessed. Prudence, fearful of doing wrong, timid in all her proceedings, often omitted doing what would have been serviceable to herself and her friends. She hesitated, pondered, deliberated on each circumstance ; and carried her fears and her doubts to such excess, that her prudence almost ceased to be a useful virtue. Still in her disposition there were many advantages. She foresaw various inconveniences in different plans of her sisters ; and she gave them wise counsel how to avoid them ; but by the world she was stigmatised with the epithets of troublesome, stiff and formal. Fortitude, possessed of an understanding superiourly strong and elevated, when she mixed with the world found occasion for all her resolution to bear with the various follies that surrounded her. Affectation she despised ; vanity she considered a fit subject for ridicule ; pride she disdained to stoop

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stoop to ; prodigality of expence she blamed ; and avarice she detested. But these various sentiments she generally confined to her own bosom. As she found few fit companions for herself, to the generality she was reserved. On this account she was universally deemed dry and austere. She knew, however, how to bear, with undaunted courage, the contempt of some of her acquaintance, and the various crosses and disappointments that are daily met with in life. Tenderly alive to the ray of joy, as to the thorn of grief, she keenly felt both pleasure and pain ; but by the former her mind was never too much elated, nor by the latter wholly depressed. Her health was sometimes seen to yield, when the firmness of her mind still remained unshaken. Thus Fortitude, truly admirable, seemed almost a riddle to many, whose capacities, so far below her's, could hardly understand her actions, or

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comprehend her words. The gentle Temperance was mild and moderate in all ; a stranger to inordinate passion, and to excess of every kind. In religion, she was strictly devout herself ; and she strove to impress on thoughtless youth the importance of divine truths. In this, she was often successful ; for she knew how to be moderate in advice ; how to give counsel without wearying ; and how to be fervent in a good cause, without excess. In friendship she was active and zealous ; still was her zeal tempered with moderation. In short, she was universally pleasing. Her manners and disposition seemed suited to all tempers, and to all persons. Still a careful observer might frequently see, even in the good Wilhelmina a deficiency in those virtues her sisters more eminently possessed. Sometimes she was too ready to excuse the faults which justice condemned ; sometimes
did

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did she incur inconveniences, from want of prudence to foresee and avoid them ; and sometimes were her spirits a little too much depressed, from want of fortitude to bear trouble, the universal portion of all.

Such were Miss Seymours ; examples of goodness in most respects ; in every instance useful examples to every one. Those who intimately knew them, could not withhold from either their warmest esteem ; but with their acquaintance Envy often interfered to silence the voice of admiration. Any one who would copy, and blend all their virtues, might approach as near to perfection, as it is possible for humanity. Religion should be the basis, the foundation on which every virtue should be built. Temperance should be admitted to soften the rigour and austerity of justice, and to moderate the doubts and fears of prudence ; and fortitude
should

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should support and animate them all. Neither justice, prudence, nor fortitude, is sufficient alone ; but the happy union of these virtues will form an impenetrable bulwark against the vices and follies of the world, and render the possessors of them unspeakably happy.

HENRY.

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HENRY.

I am sure that story is written by a woman ;
the ladies are all made so wise and clever.

MRS. ABNEY.

Is that the best remark Henry can make ? I
cannot say I think that one worthy of a *Solomon*.
I suppose, then you draw the same positive con-
clusion, that the history of Alcander is written
by a man, because there happens to be in it the
character of Cosroe, a good youth.

HENRY.

No. But you very seldom see women so
good and clever.

MRS. ABNEY.

That is a very illiberal opinion. Good abili-
ties,

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ties, any more than virtue, are not confined to Sex. The chief distinction in minds is that which education makes ; and it is right that in the education of men and women there should be a difference ; as it is right a different plan should be pursued in educating boys, according to the various employments they are to have in life. For instance, in educating an architect, no one would make musick his principal study. Or, in educating a clergyman, who would make military instruction take place of theology ? Thus, no reasonable person, in educating a girl who was likely to become the mistress of a house, and possibly the mother of a family, and whose time ought therefore to be employed in domestick concerns, would direct the whole attention of her youth to the study of the classicks. Females, who by any chance have received a learned education, have proved that
their

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their heads were as capable of acquiring learning, and of understanding a Homer, or an Epic-tetus, as those of any men. A M^e Dacier was once an example of that, in France; and Mrs. Carter still lives, to prove the truth of my assertion, in England.

SAMUEL.

Do you think any of Miss Seymours relations are living now? For I should like, a few years hence, when I choose a wife, to get one just like Temperance.

MRS. ABNEY.

I cannot say whether any of Miss Seymours relations now live. But I can promise you, if at the period you speak of, you preserve your reason cool enough to make a choice, you may easily find a woman quite as good as Wilhelmina Seymour.

H h

ELIZA-

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ELIZABETH.

Why are Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude, called the Cardinal virtues ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I refer you to Samuel for an answer.

SAMUEL.

I am sure I know not.

MRS. ABNEY.

Is it possible that a Latin scholar should not know that ? Well, then, ask Henry. He has a high opinion of the learning of his sex. He will surely not disgrace it, by his ignorance in such a trifle.

HENRY.

I could tell if I had learned it.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Where then, Henry, is your superiority over a girl ? for any one could do that. Cardinal is derived from the Latin, and its meaning is *principal*. The appellation of Cardinal is given to those virtues, because they are considered as chief, as principal virtues.

CECILIA.

I suppose that is the reason why the North, South, East, and West, are called the Cardinal points.

MRS. ABNEY.

No doubt. They are the principal points in the Heavens ; and therefore they are distinguished by the appellation of the Cardinal points.

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ISABELLA.

I thought Temperance regarded only eating and drinking. But when you described it, you seemed to consider it as something very different.

MRS. ABNEY.

Temperance is moderation in eating and drinking ; but it is likewise moderation of passion ; it is calmness, patience, serenity.

ELIZABETH.

It must then be a most desirable possession.

MRS. ABNEY.

It truly is. It is Temperance that gives lustre to every virtue, or rather, that forms all goodness into virtue. For it is she that moderates all ; that prevents all extremes ; and
excess

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excess of every kind, even in goodness, is wrong.

You none of you seem wearied to day ; yet —I am sorry to say so—part we must. It grows late ; and I am obliged to leave you. We shall soon, I hope, meet again. In the mean time, be good and be happy. Adieu.



EIGHTH



EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, HENRY, AND SAMUEL.

MRS. ABNEY.

Now, my children, I have the drawing of a pretty landscape to offer to whoever can tell me at what period, and by whom maps were first invented.

ELIZABETH.

I have lately been reading the reign of the great Alfred. I do not recollect that it is mentioned there; but his genius was so universal; that I should think it probable Alfred had introduced this invention. It was he, I believe,
who

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who first used sand in an hour glass, to measure time.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes, he did that. But maps were made many centuries before the great Alfred lived.

SAMUEL.

Is the word *map* only applied to a representation of the earth?

MRS. ABNEY.

It is likewise used for a picture of the sea; which is called a *sea map*; but more usually a Chart.

CECILIA.

I think you say maps were made long ago. That seems to me surprising; for the ancients could have had but little knowledge of geography;

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phy ; the world was so imperfectly known to them.

MRS. ABNEY.

It is true, geography was but little attended to, formerly. The globe was but partially known ; and even the most learned had but an inaccurate knowledge of the situation and extent of the parts of which they even knew the names. In the early ages there were but few travellers ; travelling not being attended with the facility it is now. Indeed, geography was hardly reduced to a science, anciently ; and we may reasonably suppose that the small knowledge the ancients had of it, was almost confined to military men. It was a great warrior that invented maps ; and we may say that vanity was the mother of this invention.

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ISABELLA.

Perhaps Alexander the great first drew maps.

MRS. ABNEY.

No. It was a custom with Alexander to take geographers with him, to measure and draw out the countries he passed over; but the invention we speak of, was learned from a great conqueror before his time.

HENRY.

I cannot think where you can find out all these things to tell us. I am sure I never see them in any of the books I read.

MRS. ABNEY.

That must be, because your reading is ill chosen. In history they are to be found. History's

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tory's ample page would not only give you the knowledge of a variety of pleasing facts, but it would teach you useful lessons without number. Historick records furnish, indeed, instruction unbounded. Men, though dead to the world, there still live; and give, by their example, most useful lessons to every age.

MARLAN.

I think I have as good a chance as any body for the drawing, to day; for I believe no one here can answer your question.

MRS. ABNEY.

Truly, I think you have. I fancy I must answer my own question, win the drawing, and then give it to you.

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MARIAN.

I shall like that.

MRS. ABNEY.

As merit then gives it to no one else, it is thus I will do. Sesostris, king of Egypt, of whom I have already told you a great deal, first drew maps. Vain of the conquests he had made, which indeed extended greatly further than those of any before him, he delineated the countries he had passed through and conquered; that his glory might be visible to all eyes. Maps could not, at that time, be drawn in the scientific manner now used, with parallels of longitude and latitude; but Sesostris first introduced the invention, which the world has since improved. The Romans took, afterwards, some pains to cultivate geography. It is said that a
hundred

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hundred years before the birth of our Saviour, they sent geographers to different parts of the globe. And it was a custom at Rome, as soon as any province was subdued, to have a painted representation of it made, and carried through the city in triumph, to be viewed by a multitude of spectators.

CECILIA.

I suppose the ancients had a much better knowledge of some parts of the earth, than they had of the different seas on the globe.

MRS. ABNEY.

From navigation alone, we can gain a knowledge of the seas. At the time Sesostris lived, this art was very flourishing at Tyre; but chiefly confined to that city. The Tyrians were the first, and the principal navigators, in the ancient world.

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world. Necessity had obliged them to find out the method of steering ships through the pathless ocean, to enable them to carry on that extensive foreign commerce, which was the support of their splendid city.

HENRY.

But was the use of the compass known then? for I think I have heard my brother say a ship could not sail without the compass.

MRS. ABNEY.

The compass is, without doubt, a most useful instrument in directing the course of a ship. But that vessels can be steered without it, the Tyrians, and after them the Egyptians, Carthaginians and Romans, all proved to us. The use of the compass is not a very old invention. We may rank it amongst the modern discoveries.

The

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The honour of having made the first compass is generally ascribed to the Italians ; though it has sometimes been said that it was known to the Chinese, very long before. However, a territory in the kingdom of Naples still bears a compass in its arms ; to shew that in this territory was born the inventor of this useful machine ; which was first made in 1302. A. D.

SAMUEL.

How much wiser the world must be now, than it was formerly.

MRS. ABNEY.

Various arts are certainly much improved ; but the knowledge of some others is now quite lost. So I doubt, if a very accurate comparison were made, whether the superiority would be so much as you suppose, in favour of the moderns.

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derns. Human learning, when arrived at the full splendour of its meridian, is so dim, that man has nothing to boast of.

I wish you, my dears, to draw a lesson of moral improvement from all the different things you learn. I have already recommended to you history, as a most useful study. And even from geography may be drawn some solid reflections. I will give you a few lines I have, on the subject of geography ; for my meaning is better expressed in them, than I could express it in words of my own. And possibly, being in rhyme, the sense may be more forcible impressed on your minds.

“ In Geography, behold a shadow'd plan,
“ Of the depraved, and hapless heart of man;
“ Mountains of pride, abysses of despair,
“ And horrid wilds of pain, disease and care;

“ Oceans

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- “ Oceans of passion, whose impetuous tide,
“ Deluge the soul, and reason’s voice deride.
“ Amidst these horrors, some few spots arise,
“ Like pompous cities, to th’ affrighted eyes ;
“ Th’ improvements made by study in the mind ;
“ Vast piles of knowledge, faculties refined :
“ Here wit, there taste, their dazzling charms display,
“ And often lead the traveller astray.
“ Far from these domes, which lab’ring science builds,
“ Which pride admires, and brain sick fancy gilds,
“ The sylvan scene in beauteous prospect spreads,
“ O’er length’ning vales, and lofty mountains’ heads.
“ Its fragrant flowers, in glowing liveries dress’d,
“ Its waving groves, with various fruits oppress’d,
“ Its furrow’d fields, adorn’d with golden grains,
“ Its painted meadows, and its verdant plains,
“ Figure fair virtue, in the silent shade,
“ By constant toil, and culture, perfect made ;
“ Remote from pleasure, vanity and noise,
“ And rich in fruits that claim eternal joys.”

K k

I recom-

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I recommend to each of you to learn to repeat these lines.

ELIZABETH.

We will.

MARIAN.

When may I have my drawing?

MRS. ABNEY.

Oh, now. Here it is.

MARIAN.

It is very pretty. But I would rather have deserved it, than have had it given me as a favour.

MRS. ABNEY.

The wish to gain it, makes you deserve it; and I hope the ability to win it, you will soon possess.

ISA-



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ISABELLA.

Have you got any history for us to day ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I am sorry to say I have not. I have nothing to amuse you, unless it be two little translations I have lately made, from the German, of Gellert's tales and fables.

ISABELLA.

I dare say we shall like them.

MRS. ABNEY.

I do not know that you will particularly admire these. Some of Gellert's works are very good ; and some of his fables very pretty ; but I do not tell you that these are the best. Come Elizabeth. You shall read this one aloud. Re-

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member

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member I do not offer it you as a lesson of morality ; but only as a page of amusement. It is the history of an old man. I dare say there is not one amongst you who could not put some name at the top of it ; and then it would serve as well for the history of your acquaintance, as for Mr. Gellert's friend. It may divert you at least.

(ELIZABETH, *reads.*)

THE

THE OLD MAN.

A TALE.

•
AN aged sire, nor rich, nor mean,
Ninety long years this world had seen.
Had he ne'er lived, nor never died,
My subject now had been denied.

But as 'tis said that he did live,
His hist'ry I will quickly give;
And a rare tale I now will tell,
Of all that e'er this man befell.

Let others sing in rapt'rous strains,
Of wine and love, that fire their brains.
Yes. Let their themes be love and wine;
Thou poor old man, thou shalt be mine.

Let

the EIGHTH CONVERSATION.

Let others sing of cities walled;
Of towers' steel, of ramparts' wall.
But towers' death, and towers' pain,
Shall be the subject of my lay.

Oh! Fear, had though they wrap around;—
All eyes but, upon the sword,—
This man was born, he lived, did well;
He then fell sick, and died in bed.



SAMU-

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SAMUEL.

Poor old man ! At least Envy did not molest him.

CECILIA.

No ; nor does admiration disturb his ashes.

MRS. ABNEY.

Come, criticks spare my aged sire. Content yourselves with learning this profitable lesson from him ; unless you strive to be good, and to render service as far as your power of being useful extends, you will, each of you, merely exist and die, as he did.

SAMUEL.

I really should not like to have such a history written of me ; so I will try to be virtuous and
valiant ;

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valiant; and I hope, should my life be related, it will be in another manner.

MRS. ABNEY.

That is a heroick resolution, and worthy of my dear Samuel. Now, here is another fable. Who will read this?

CECILIA.

I, if you please.

MRS. ABNEY.

Take it then.

(CECILIA, *reads.*)

A FA-

A F A B L E.

Two sweet warblers of the dale,
 A goldfinch, and a nightingale,
 Took one summer's eve their station,
 Close to Damon's habitation.
 Now the landscape you may draw ;
 A little cottage, thatch'd with straw ;
 Daizies and cowslips deck'd the ground ;
 And fragrant bushes grew around.
 A porch was at the cottage door,
 With moss and ivy cover'd o'er ;
 And here sat Colin, Damon's joy,
 A pretty, rosy, playful boy.
 Now bade farewell the setting sun ;
 And the sweet songsters had begun.
 The warblers strain'd their little throats ;
 But one pour'd forth such charming notes,
 That Colin, with attention, heard,
 And often wish'd for this sweet bird.

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To please his child, then Damon sought;
And the two songsters quickly caught.

See the feather'd captives here.

Tell me, now, which pleased your ear.

Showing the goldfinch, he reply'd,

By none, I'm sure, 'twill be deny'd,

That this is he who best can sing;

Who made the hills and valleys ring.

A nightingale, continued he, —

That ugly thing, — it could not be:

Damon to Colin thus reply'd;

Never, my child, in haste decide.

From this, a useful lesson reap;

And all thy life my counsel keep.

Oft, hid beneath a homely face,

Is virtue, sense, and mental grace.

These gifts the soul do not adorn,

Where e'er the mask of beauty's worn.

As glitt'ring wealth, and gaudy show,

Often conceal both vice and woe;

While coarsely clad, you still may find,

A virtuous, and a happy mind.

M R S.

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MRS. ABNEY.

How do you like that fable ?

ELIZABETH.

Very much. Only I can hardly think the nightingale is an ugly bird. I have sometimes heard it ; and its song is so sweet.

MRS. ABNEY.

I assure you its plumage yields, in beauty, to most of the feathered songsters. You, as well as Colin, I see, may profit from Damon's advice ; and learn, from the example in the fable, not to judge from outward appearance. Goodness and sense are jewels far more rare than beauty ; and frequently you may find them concealed beneath an outward appearance that will have no attractions. Keep, therefore, your

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mind always free from prejudice ; and never decide in haste ; but examine coolly before you judge.

ISABELLA.

Have you any more fables for us ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I have not, to day. But, as these have entertained you, I will bring you some more, soon. Now, farewell. I am always sorry to quit you ; but we shall meet again, I hope shortly.



NINTH

NINTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, HENRY, AND SAMUEL.

MRS. ABNEY.

Good morning, my children. I shall try, to day, how well you have profited by our different conversations. To each of you I will propose a question ; and the drawing belongs to that one who gives me the clearest and best answer.

SAMUEL.

Oh, that is too difficult. To answer a question, is almost as bad as to write a theme.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

I fear you are still an idle boy. If you can learn to give a clear answer to a question, you will not find it so difficult to write a theme. Elizabeth, it is with you I shall begin. What is Generosity? In what does it consist?—After you have given the definition, I expect you to relate some little fact in history, or some tale, to illustrate the definition you give.

ELIZABETH.

A generous person, I think, makes large presents, and gives all that is in his power. He spends his money without fear. In short, a generous person is the very reverse of a miser.

MRS. ABNEY.

The picture you are drawing, is rather that of
a liberal

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a liberal, or more properly of a munificent man. Now, munificence is but one effect of generosity ; which comprises more than you seem aware of. It is a nobleness of mind, that makes a person incapable of any unworthy action. It is a magnanimity of soul, that raises him above all self-interest and selfishness.

ELIZABETH.

If I could not define generosity, at least I remember six examples of it. May I relate them?

MRS. ABNEY.

What, all at once?

ELIZABETH.

In one little anecdote, I will give them you all.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Begin, then.

ELIZABETH.

In the reign of Edward the third, Calais was besieged by the English. The inhabitants defended themselves with great bravery; and famine alone obliged them, at last, to yield. Edward, exasperated by their long resistance, seemed a while forgetful of his usual clemency; when six of the principal citizens appeared before him. They earnestly solicited for death; entreated him to accept of them as victims; and to be merciful to their fellow citizens. Edward, moved by the generous conduct of these great men, granted life to them, and spared the citizens they so nobly pleaded for.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

An example very well chosen, Elizabeth. Those men showed themselves possessed of minds both generous, and disinterested; and Edward would have greatly departed from his usual character, if he had not spared them. As that is an anecdote taken from history, you must tell me in what year it happened; at least in what century.

ELIZABETH.

Edward the third reigned in the fourteenth century; but I really do not remember in what year Calais was besieged.

MRS. ABNEY.

It was in the year 1346. — Now, my little
M m Marian,

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Marian, try you to give me an answer. Tell me, what is truth?

MARIAN.

The contrary to falsehood. I remember you once taught me an answer that Cyrus, a prince, who lived a great while ago, made. He was asked what was the best thing he had ever learned; and he replied, "to speak the truth."

MRS. ADNEY.

Very well remembered, indeed. Truth is a most noble quality. It is one of the attributes of the divinity. It renders a person equitable, just, sincere. On earth, it forms the strongest bond of union in society; and we are certain that it is beloved, and acceptable in heaven.

I recollect a little Allegory, applicable to the subject of Truth, which I will relate to you.

AN

AN ALLEGORY.

COSMANDER reigned over a very small territory, in Asia Minor. His realm being much bounded, his subjects were almost individually within his knowledge. The city where the king kept his court, was, like most other great cities, the seat of pleasure and of luxury. The principal families followed the example of the court ; and passed their days in amusement and in gayety.

Cosmander, as he took the air, one summer's morning, having prolonged his ride further than usual from the town, met a female, whose singular appearance attracted his attention. She was of a majestic figure ; her countenance was fair and composed ; and her dress

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the most simple and modest imaginable, and entirely white. Cosmander viewed her with admiration ; and, curious to inquire her name, entered a cottage. The poor cottager told him that who she was, or where she came from, he knew not ; but that she now resided constantly in that neighbourhood ; and was beloved by every one. He added that all who came from the town stopped to look at her ; and many, not knowing her name, called her the Reverse of Falsehood, who was a female that lived in the town. But, said the countryman, though these people pretend to admire her, they just gaze for a moment, then pass on, forgetful of the object that attracted their notice.

Cosmander returned to his palace. For many days he continued pensive ; his mind wholly occupied with the sweet fair one he had seen. He compared her with Falsehood ; who had before so
greatly

greatly charmed him ;—and how far superiour did he find her. He meditated some excuse to converse with his new acquaintance. At length, one morning, he said to his courtiers that he could not be easy, while he remained ignorant of any one of his subjects ; and he commanded that this nameless female should be brought to court. His orders were quickly obeyed. She was brought before the king. Though so modest, she appeared before majesty undaunted, undismayed. Neither did royalty awe, nor grandeur abash her. Cosmander inquired her birth place ; and why her name was not enrolled amongst those of his subjects. She mildly replied that though a visitant here, in heaven was her origin ; that she loved mankind, and wished to dwell in the world ; but that Falsehood constantly strove to overpower her, and drive her away ; that this made her fly from populous cities,

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cities, and seek the shade of retirement. The king, more charmed with her discourse than he had been even with her form, entreated that she would no more fly from him, but make her residence in his court ; that she would receive from him a royal diadem, and share his regal honours. But pomp and splendour had no charms for her. She declined these offers. In a court, she said, she could not live without difficulty ; peaceful scenes alone were her delight. The king alternately threatened, entreated ; but it was all in vain. At last, too much enraptured to part from her, he offered to forsake his crown, to live with her in retirement. This proposal she accepted ; —and Cosmander found himself most amply rewarded for what he relinquished. It was *Truth* he wedded. His happiness was now confirmed, and unbounded. All human grandeur faded, and became insignificant
in

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in his eyes. He had gained a treasure of inestimable value ; a treasure that conducted him in the paths of goodness, on earth ; and at death, was his guide to heaven.

SAMUEL.

NINTH CONVERSATION.

SAMUEL.

Is that all? Is it done?

MRS. ABNEY.

Are you not satisfied?

SAMUEL.

Oh, I like that story so much that I wish it were as long again.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am glad you are pleased. And now Samuel, you shall be the next speaker. Let me hear what is Philanthropy.

SAMUEL.

I have learned enough of Greek to know the derivation of that word; and to be able, I think,

NINTH CONVERSATION. 281

think, to explain it. Philanthropy is a love of our fellow creatures.

MRS. ABNEY.

It is love of mankind. Real philanthropy strives to mitigate and remove the sufferings of all. It quenches, in great measure, self-love ; and makes a person think no exertion too great, to do good to mankind.

SAMUEL.

I think I remember an example of philanthropy. It was Mr. Howard.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. The name of Howard can never be forgotten. He was philanthropy itself. Forgetful of himself, he would travel about, regardless of scorching heat, or of freezing cold, when

N n

he

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he could alleviate the sufferings of the wretched. Often had he the gratification of seeing his assiduity to relieve distress crowned with success. And far longer will his name be perpetuated on earth, by his own actions, than by any monument the hands of man can raise. Does anybody remember another example of philanthropy?

CECILIA.

I think I do. It was a lord mayor of London, a great while ago.

MRS. ABNEY.

That one I was thinking of myself. It was Sir John Lawrence. He is celebrated by Dr. Darwin, in his elegant poem, the Botanick Garden. And the Journal of the plague year, 1665, says; " Sir John Lawrence, the then lord
" mayor, continued the whole time in the city;
" heard

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“ heard complaints, and redressed them ; en-
“ forced the wisest regulations then known, and
“ saw them executed. The day after the dis-
“ ease was known with certainty to be the
“ plague, above forty thousand servants were dis-
“ missed, and turned into the streets to perish ;
“ for no one would receive them into their
“ houses ; and the villages near London, drove
“ them away with pitch forks and fire arms.
“ Sir John Lawrence supported them all ; as
“ well as the needy, who were sick ; at first by
“ expending his own fortune, till subscriptions
“ could be solicited, and received from all parts
“ of the nation.”

SAMUEL.

He must have been good, indeed. Do you think London will ever have such another mayor ?

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MRS. ABNEY.

Oh, yes. I am not willing to suppose that virtue has taken her flight from earth. I hope no plague will return, to offer a similar opportunity for a London mayor to show his benevolence. But many will, I trust, emulate Sir John Lawrence's great example, in other instances. Now, Cecilia, tell me what is usually called *Sense*; and what that is which we call *Good Sense*.

CECILIA.

I really know no distinction. Are they not the same?

MRS. ABNEY.

No. They are very different; and often even quite separated.

CECI-

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CECILIA.

I should think a person of learning had always good sense; and that an illiterate person was without it.

MRS. ABNEY.

No. There you are quite mistaken. You may often meet with a learned fool. A person of Sense is, I imagine, a person possessed of quickness of intellects; and of a refined taste, that makes him delight in works of wit and imagination. A man of sense gives pleasure in conversation; and pleasure likewise he keenly feels. Now, Good Sense is, I think that just perception of right, which makes a person act with reason and consistency in every action of his life. It makes him confine his desires and his wishes to the situation in which he is placed; and teaches him to perform the most humble duties

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duties in life, without repining. You will observe that it is not of necessity that sense and good sense should be separated ; although we have to regret that they sometimes are.

CECILIA.

I clearly understand what you mean. But can you give us an example of what you have been saying ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. Imagine a woman, who in her youth has received a refined education, and who by nature is endowed with very superiour faculties. She sees with full force every beauty in works of taste and genius. From her extensive reading, her information is great ; and she is distinguished by her excellence in musick. This young woman is married to a man of moderate fortune. She has a young family that calls for
mater-

NINTH CONVERSATION. 287

maternal care ; and has servants to regulate and instruct. Still she cannot give up her books, her harp, her piano forte, nor her poetry. That, she says, would be sacrificing sublime joys to menial employments. In every company she gives delight, by her vivacity, pleasant manners, and sprightly conversation. In short, the world join in proclaiming her a woman of great sense. But can you, who see the private scenes of her house ; her husband's fortune diminished, by her want of care ; her children running wild, ill clothed, and uninstructed ; disorder and waste reigning in her neglected nursery, and kitchen ; while she is shut up with her books, or singing to her harp ; can you say, this is a woman of good sense ?

CECILIA.

Oh, no. She has neither good sense, nor goodness.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Now, a hasty observer would exclaim, “ here “ is the bad effect of female learning.” But it is more properly the want of good sense, to direct learning and every acquirement to its right use, and to place it in proper order. Had the woman I have been describing, regulated her house properly ; had she been the nurse, and the instructor, as well as the mother of her children ; and had she then given up company, to procure herself leisure hours, for the gratification of her taste for reading and musick ; her learning would only have been a relaxation, which would have enabled her to return with alacrity to the performance of her duties.

CECILIA.

I am glad you do not disapprove of women gaining information, as well as men.

MRS.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Indeed I do not ; but I highly disapprove of every abuse ; more especially of the abuse of knowledge.

Isabella's turn comes next. Explain, my dear, what is greatness.

ISABELLA.

Greatness consists in having a great house, a great deal of money, and a great many servants.

MRS. ABNEY.

Well done, Isabella. There is a pretty assemblage of the word great, though not of true greatness. I dare say most people would think your definition just. Now imagine a wealthy nobleman, surrounded with grandeur. He is high in favour with his prince ; loaded with

O o

digni-

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dignities ; and wherever he turns, he commands obeisance. Now, is this not a great man ?

ISABELLA.

I think so.

MRS. ABNEY.

And he thinks so. So wrapped up is he in his own consequence, that the cry of misery or poverty never touches his ear. He feels no want—but—the greatest of all wants ; that of a virtuous mind ; and the peace which virtue brings. Now, imagine another man, who once held a similar high station. Circumstances the most cruel, have reduced him to poverty. He has no resource but to quit the world, and to retire, with his family, to a remote part of the country. An humble hut is his residence ; and not one servant has he now to bring him even common necessities ;—he who once had num-
berless

berless attendants, ready to fly each time he turned his head. To procure his children even bread, to sustain life, he must labour with his own hands. Without reluctance, without one murmur, he receives his lot; he becomes a gardener. His daily pay proves sufficient to support his family; and his mind is now at ease. Grandeur he regrets not. He sees it is a bubble, a nothing; which a breath, lighter even than wind, can disperse. But wordly losses have no power to shake his great, and good mind. Man, in every station, may contemplate the beauties of nature; may admire a God, in all his works; and look up, with hope, to ~~heaven~~, as to his eternal and blissful home. Such were the reflections of this fallen courtier; and he found himself happy. And ~~he was great~~; for he was master of himself; of his own mind, of his own passions; and this dominion they have not who

292 NINTH CONVERSATION.

are enervated by pleasure and luxury. Now, which was the greater man ?

ISABELLA.

I think the poor man was the better.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes ; and the greater. For true greatness does not consist in grandeur, but in elevation of sentiment, and nobleness of mind. Now, Henry, you come last to day. Explain to me the word unanimity.

HENRY.

It is agreement.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. It is concord and harmony. And do you think it a desirable thing ?

HENRY.

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HENRY.

I believe so. I never thought much about it ; but I know, at school, we are always told to agree.

MRS. ABNEY.

Now, for a moment, then, attend and think. Harmony in families is a most desirable thing. A good, and united family seems to be a representation we can make to ourselves of the blessed above. And to live in such a family, must be, in some sort, a preparation for the society of angels. To preserve this harmony, each individual must cultivate an assemblage of virtues ; most especially truth, generosity, and a good temper. Alternately must each one bear with the failings and foibles of the others. A cross word, or a thwarting reply, which will keenly wound the breast where self love predominates, must be passed

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sed by unnoticed ; indeed, to preserve concord unbroken, it must instantly be forgiven, and as soon forgot. Let me strongly impress upon you, that to preserve unanimity, no sacrifice can be too great. Cherish it then, most cordially. The felicity it produces, will largely reward your pains. Let nothing weaken that tye which binds you all. But let each day give strength to the bands of love with which you are now united.—Each one has, I think, given me an answer to a question ; but how shall I determine whose degree of merit is highest ?

ELIZABETH.

Will you let me propose to you something ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Most willingly.

ELIZA-

NINTH CONVERSATION. 295

ELIZABETH.

To day, do not make any comparison of merit ; but if we all join in relinquishing our claims, pray give the drawing to Henry ; for he is disappointed not to have had one for so long a time.

MRS. ABNEY.

Most readily do I agree to that, provided he will make me a promise.

HENRY.

Oh, yes. I will make a promise, to get a drawing.

MRS. ABNEY.

The promise I require is, that each day, for a month, you take an hour from your fishing, or other amusements, to add to the time already allotted for reading.

HENRY.

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HENRY.

I promise to do so, if you will lend me books.

MRS. ABNEY.

Then the promise is sealed ; for to that I agree. Now here is the drawing. It is a pretty representation of partridges, feeding on a moor.

SAMUEL.

Oh, that is pretty. But it reminds us that this is the first day of the cruel month of September.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. Some of our neighbours have, indeed, already begun their barbarous sport ; and thousands of poor partridges will quickly fall.

SAMU-



№ 9.

NINTH CONVERSATION. 297

SAMUEL.

I am always sorry for the poor birds.

MRS. ABNEY.

As it is necessary for the subsistence of man, it is right to kill ; but to take away life, though only the life of a bird, for mere sport, does seem cruel. I see, however, a sportsman approaching the house ; our conversation must therefore be interrupted ; so I will say adieu.

ELIZABETH.

I hope we shall soon see you again.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. I promise that you shall.

P p

TENTH



TENTH CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA, MARIAN, HENRY,
AND SAMUEL.

All seated around Elizabeth's Work Table.

ELIZABETH.

As Mrs. Abney is not yet come, I will lay down my work, and, if you give me leave, entertain you by reading a very pretty fable which my aunt has lately sent me.

SAMUEL.

We shall be much obliged to you.

P p 2

HENRY.

300 TENTH CONVERSATION.

HENRY.

Fables are generally amusing.

ELIZABETH.

If you do justice to this one, you will praise both the tale and its moral. And then, following the example of the cripple and the blind man, let us all mutually seek happiness in striving to assist, and give pleasure to each other. This is a translation from the German of Gellert. We have already, you may remember, had two or three pretty things, translated from that author.—Now for the Fable.

(ELIZABETH, *reads.*)

A FABLE.

A F A B L E.

WERE nature's blessings all combin'd ;
In ev'ry human form,
No mutual int'rest should we find,
The selfish hearts to warm.

But though her various gifts we share,
Not all alike are blest ;
And virtue, wit, and talents rare,
By all are not possest.

Thus from our imperfection flows,
A philanthropick mind ;
For social love full oft bestows,
Those gifts which are not join'd.

Whatever be your valued prize,
Oh ! let not pride prevail :
That bliss full oft in kindness lies,
Learn from this humble tale.

Groping

302 TENTH CONVERSATION.

Groping along a narrow street,
A blind man sought his way.
He groped and groped, in hopes to meet
With one who saw the day.

He heeded ev'ry breath that stirr'd,
O'erjoyed at every sound.
Approaching steps he thought he heard
Move o'er the rugged ground.

With help of crutches now drew near,
Some steps exceeding slow.
Again he lent a list'ning ear,
And fear'd it was a foe.

The cripple was extremely glad,
To see so strong a man.
Crutches were all the help he had,
Which he could scarcely span.

With

TENTH CONVERSATION. 303

With nervous voice, the blind man spoke ;
 Implored his speedy aid.
The other thought he meant to joke,
 At weakness he betray'd.

The bliss of sight, I am deny'd ;
 And friends indeed are few.
Oh ! be my friend, oh ! be my guide :
 I'll love and thank you too.

Can I afford assistance ? I,
 Who am so very weak ?
For help, alas ! I often sigh,
 And succour now I seek.

Plainly, indeed, it does appear,
 One evil you deplore ;
But you are strong enough to bear,
 A hundred weight, or more.

True,

True, true, my friend ; and if you'll be,
My kind, and gracious guide,
My arm shall be your strength, when we,
Shall both walk side by side.

The lame man answer'd, you are right ;
On you then I'll depend ;
And my clear eyes shall be your light,
Until our journey's end.

In merry glee they now jog on,
Performing both together,

What neither of them could have done,
Had he not met the other.

Thus gentle love, by love repaid,
Your social worth displays ;
While mutual kindness, mutual aid,
Still brightens all your days.

TENTH CONVERSATION: 305

CECILIA.

These two luckless heroes of Gellert's tale, give us, I think, an excellent example.

ELIZABETH.

Yes. And we must all remember, and follow it. Had you, Henry, the other night - - - - -
- - - But here is my aunt.

Enter MRS. ABNEY.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am pleased to see this little circle so well employed ; all appear to be either readers, listeners, or workers.

ELIZABETH.

We have been amusing ourselves with the little fable, which you sent me last week.

Q q

MRS.

306 TENTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am glad it has afforded you amusement. And I am happy to see you again. It is now four weeks since I was here. I recollect the last day we met together, was at the commencement of the war against the partridges. On this day begins the destruction of a more beautiful bird.

HENRY.

The pheasant, I think.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. And see I have brought you a beautiful drawing of this bird. Who can tell from what quarter of the globe the pheasant originally came ?

SAMUEL.

Not I.

CECI-

TENTH CONVERSATION. 307

CECILIA.

Nor I.

MRS. ABNEY.

It came, originally, from Asia ; from the banks of the Phasis, a river of Colchis, in Asia Minor. The name of Pheasant is derived from Phasis.

SAMUEL.

What a very beautiful bird ! It seems particularly cruel to destroy so large, and fine a creature.

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes ; but beauty has no power to save this poor bird's life. The poet justly says,

“ Ah ! what avail thy glossy varying dyes,

“ Thy purple crest, and scarlet circling eyes ;

“ The vivid green thy shining plumes unfold,

“ Thy painted crest, and breast that flames with gold ! ”

Q q 2

The

308 TENTH CONVERSATION.

The sportsman heeds them not, when pleasure prompts him to draw his gun, and take a beauteous pheasant for his aim.

ELIZABETH.

Now, who is to get this drawing ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I hardly know how to determine. I was thinking of something ; but I fear it will be too easy. It is a question that you all, perhaps, can answer ; and I have not got six drawings.

HENRY.

Oh, it cannot be too easy.

MRS. ABNEY.

Tell me, then, what learned man first assumed the appellation of philosopher ?

ELIZA-

TENTH CONVERSATION. 309

ELIZABETH.

I wish I could remember.

SAMUEL.

I do not think that question is very easy. But was it a learned man who first called himself a philosopher? for I think that was an humble appellation for him to take. I have been told that philosopher means merely a *lover of wisdom*.

MRS. ABNEY.

I have often told you that humility frequently accompanies extensive knowledge. The philosopher I allude to, proved that he was a true lover of wisdom; for his labour to search after it was indefatigable.

ISA-

310 TENTH CONVERSATION.

ISABELLA.

Do tell us his name.

ELIZABETH.

I do not think we any of us can tell you.

CECILIA.

Yes ; I believe I recollect. Was it not Pythagoras ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Quite right. To Cecilia belongs the palm of victory.

SAMUEL.

Will you tell us something about Pythagoras ?
I know nothing of him.

MRS. ABNEY.

He lived almost five hundred years before our
Savi-

TENTH CONVERSATION. 311

Saviour. He was born in Samos, an island in the Archipelago ; and it is said that he excelled in every science. He travelled into Egypt, and was there initiated in all Egyptian learning. He visited the Chaldeans, Hebrews, and Phenicians ; and learned from them all their sciences. His thirst for knowledge carried him even to India ; where he likewise collected all that was valuable. In the science of numbers, he was particularly excellent. Every school-boy knows that the multiplication-table, when written in a square, still bears the name of Pythagoras's table, He made it in that form for his disciples. In musick also he greatly excelled ; and had a high opinion of its power on the mind. With his harp, he every morning composed his own passions, by playing and singing the hymns of Thales.

ELIZA-

312 TENTH CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH.

Was not Thales one of the wise men of Greece ?

MRS. ABNEY.

One of the Sages of Greece was named Thales; but the poet and musician of that name was born at Crete, and lived more than two hundred years before the Grecian Thales.

SAMUEL.

How proud his country must have been of so wise a man as Pythagoras !

MRS. ABNEY.

This philosopher, after having ended his travels, returned to his native isle ; but so cruel a tyrant reigned there then, that he shortly after quitted Samos, and went to Crotona, in Italy ;
where

TENTH CONVERSATION. 313

where he established a school ; and so great was his fame, that he had six hundred disciples. His house was called the Temple of Ceres, and the street where he lived, the Muscum.

ISABELLA.

Did not the inhabitants of Samos very much regret his loss ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Probably many of them did.

ELIZABETH.

What is it that is called the Philosopher's Stone ?

SAMUEL.

Oh, that is only imaginary. There is no such thing.

CECILIA.

No, Samuel ? — I think I have heard that it is

R r

a stone

314 TENTH CONVERSATION.

a stone that turns every thing it touches into gold.

MRS. ABNEY.

Not every thing, Cecilia ; only metals.

SAMUEL.

Is there then such a thing ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I cannot say there is ; for it is not yet discovered ; though to find it has puzzled the brain of many a learned head. In all metals, there is a proportion of gold ; and it is supposed that a preparation may be made that might separate all the metal, whether it be copper, lead, tin, or any other, and leave the gold pure, that the metal contained. This unfound preparation is named the Philosopher's Stone.

ELIZA-

TENTH CONVERSATION. 315

ELIZABETH

It belongs to Chymistry, does it not, to find it out ?

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes ; or rather to Alchymy, which is the highest branch of Chymistry.

HENRY.

How rich the discoverer of this stone might make himself !

MRS. ABNEY.

That is doubted, Henry : for the particles of gold, in most metals, are so small, that it is not imagined they would pay the expence of separating them.

ISABELLA.

Then the discovery would be of no value.

R r 2

MRS.

316 TENTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY.

Perhaps not, as a thing of use ; but as an object of curiosity, it might.

SAMUEL.

Do you think it ever will be found out ?

MRS. ABNEY.

I really cannot tell. As it is said it has been known, it may be discovered again.

SAMUEL.

Where was it known ?

MRS. ABNEY.

In Egypt ; where the knowledge of Chymistry was brought to great perfection. But when Dioclesian took Alexandria, he ordered all the
Egyptian

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Egyptian books on this science to be burned ; for he said that Egypt should no longer have an opportunity of enriching herself by the making of gold ; lest, again growing rich, she might be induced to revolt. Other historians deny that this secret was ever written. They say, though known in Egypt, it was confined to the royal family, and transmitted, verbally, from father to son ; and that thus it perished.

ELIZABETH.

How difficult to find out truth, when one historian positively contradicts what another asserts !

MRS. ABNEY.

It is indeed. Yet truth is so pleasing, one would wish, in all things to ascertain it. But when error is confined to trifles, how happy ! And we should direct our earnest supplications
to

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to the God of Truth, beseeching him never to permit us to err in any matter of importance. This subject reminds me that I have translated for you two more of Gellert's fables, as you seemed pleased with the others. I have brought them for your entertainment to-day. Truth having been our last subject, you shall have this first. Samuel, you shall be reader. I enjoin you, now, by a good emphasis in your reading, to do all the justice possible to the sense of the author, and to conceal the blemishes of the translator.

SAMUEL.

I will.

(SAMUEL, *reads.*)

A FA-

A F A B L E.

TAKE not on trust, what you may learn,
 From your own judgement, to discern.
 Consider Truth your greatest prize ;
 'Tis Truth alone can make you wise.
 But far and near, however nigh,
 Conceal'd the precious gem will lie ;
 And vain the wish, and vain the pray'r,
 Unless, yourself, you search with care.

Aged, and on his bed of death,
 A poor sick man did gasp for breath :
 Ere yet the thread of life was broke,
 Thus to his son he feebly spoke ;
 That you, my child, may never know,
 Nor chilling want, nor cruel woe,
 But share the joys which life afford,
 A heap of treasure I have stored.
 It lies —— Here ceased the fault'ring sound ;
 And left the secret quite profound.

The

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The eager youth impatient cries,
Where did my father say it lies ?
What room, what place, shall I explore ?
Where shall I find this golden ore ?
His neighbours, to assist the search,
Ransack the garden, barn, and church.
Weary with toil, they all return'd ;
Quite vex'd, despairing, and concern'd.
The youth dismiss'd his friends to rest ;
Thank'd them for having done their best ;
Resolved, himself, to find the hoard,
And soon become a wealthy lord.
Back to his father's room he hies,
“ In ev'ry creek and corner pries ; ”
When in the floor a plank he raised,
And on his wealth, in transport, gazed.
One single plank alone conceal'd
The secret, which was now reveal'd.
Thus heav'n-born Truth is veil'd in light ;
Not hid beneath the shades of night.

ELIZA-

TENTH CONVERSATION. 321

ELIZABETH.

That is a very good fable. I like it very much.

MRS. ABNEY.

It contains a just moral ; that truth is concealed from a superficial observer. It may be discovered by him, who assiduously searches for it. I do not promise you so much moral from the next ; but it may please you. It relates to the Cuckoo always proclaiming his own name. Will Isabella be now the reader ?

ISABELLA.

If you please.

(ISABELLA, *reads.*)

S s

A FA-

A F A B L E.

A Cuckoo, perch'd upon a spray,
 Saw a young Starling wing his way,
 From a far distant, well-built town,
 To his own little native home.
 The Cuckoo cried with all his might ;
 The little Starling stopp'd his flight.
 Sir, said the Cuckoo, I would hear,
 What news you bring, your friends to cheer.
 In town, what's said of our sweet notes ?
 Who praises our melodious throats ?
 What say they of the Nightingale ?
 The lovely warbler of the dale.
 The Starling cried, men always join,
 To praise her melody divine.
 And of the Lark ? again he says,
 Why, half the town her notes too praise.
 What say they to the Blackbird's voice ?
 Do any hear his song by choice ?

Oh,

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Oh, many list ; and oft he charms,
When with wild notes his mate he warms.
Well, says the Cuckoo, vex'd to hear,
That all were praised, both far and near,
Pray, what is said in town of me ?
Pray, who extols my harmony ?
Oh, says the Starling, I've ne'er heard.
That any spoke of you, one word.
The Cuckoo then, with rage and pride,
To the young Starling thus replied ,
Since none have yet made me their care,
With my own name I'll fill the air ;
And each returning spring will I,
Make hill and dale to me reply.
I'll *Cuckoo* o'er and o'er resound,
While Echo shall repeat the sound.
Thus ingrate man will ev'ry year
My loud reproach be doom'd to hear.

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CECILIA.

I like that very much. Mr. Gellert's head must have had some imagination. I should never have thought of that way of accounting for the bird's cry of Cuckoo.

MRS. ABNEY.

This fable may serve to show us how much vanity can blind, and how ill we often judge of our own talents. The Cuckoo fancied he sang well; and expected to be praised for his melodious notes, when in truth he was incapable of singing.

HENRY.

Then, if we cannot judge of ourselves, who is to judge for us? for our enemies must be prejudiced, and our friends partial.

MRS.



N^o 10.

TENTH CONVERSATION. 325

MRS. ABNEY.

The eyes of a judicious person are doubly open to the faults of his friends. And after having made a good choice, you should value your friend's applause, and be attentive to his censure. I fear it is growing late, and it is time for us to separate. But I must not forget to give Cecilia her drawing. Here, my dear.

CECILIA.

Many thanks for this pretty Pheasant. We are sorry to say adieu.

MRS. ABNEY.

And I regret leaving you. But a few weeks will bring us again together.

ELE-

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION.

MRS. ABNEY, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA,
MARIAN, HENRY, AND SAMUEL.

MRS. ABNEY.

You see, in spite of the cold, I am come to
visit you to-day.

ELIZABETH.

We are much obliged to you.

CECILIA.

To determine to come out in such weather,
~~requires~~ a great deal of courage.

MRS.

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION. 293

MRS. ABNEY.

Do you consider courage a virtue ?

ELIZABETH.

Yes.

MRS. ABNEY.

Then, of necessity, you admit that every one ought to possess it. Now, suppose a person to be in a house that is on fire ; he does well in not leaving that house, though certain of being burned in staying, because it is right to be courageous.

ELIZABETH, (*laughs.*)

I did not say that.

MRS. ABNEY.

You said courage consisted in not being afraid of *any thing* ; and that it was a virtue. Now,

T t

if

330 ELEVENTH CONVERSATION.

if your positions were just, my inference would also be just. Then you see you are wrong. Samuel, what do you say on this subject?

SAMUEL.

I think courage consists in being without fear ; and it is necessary for a man ; but a woman has nothing to do with it.

CECILIA.

So I think. There is no shame for a woman to be afraid. Fear in her, is, very excusable.

MRS. ABNEY.

In short, on this subject you seem all agreed. Now I will attempt to define these words. Resolution is, I think, passive fortitude ; and courage, active fortitude. I consider them both virtues ; and consequently, that they ought to be

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION. 331

be cultivated by men and women. But, Elizabeth, courage does not consist in being without fear, only in boldly overcoming fear, and resolutely resisting all unavoidable danger. Resolution is the support of courage.

CECILIA.

Still I cannot see the necessity for a woman to be courageous. A variety of things that a man would disregard, it is surely very excusable that she should fear.

MRS. ABNEY.

There should be no excuse for any thing ridiculous and unreasonable. Reserve excuse for that multitude of frailties, which will require sufficient indulgence from our friends, without our adding unnecessarily to their number. A woman's courage is not required to be displayed by going to war; or by hazarding her life, in

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enterprizes for which she is disqualified by the feebleness of her frame. But, as a mother, should she be called upon to act for her children, she should resolutely overcome difficulties ; and courageously face perils, and dangers, to protect and serve them. In younger life, you will have more exercise for resolution, than for courage. You should arm yourselves with fortitude to overcome all those foolish fears, which a ridiculous custom seems to authorize, and has stamped with the appellation of *female fears*. These are truly ridiculous. They become almost unconquerable by indulgence ; they weaken your minds, and are destructive to your health ; for the body and mind generally keep pace together ; and in addition to all this, they render you most insupportable companions to every one.

SAMUEL.

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SAMUEL.

Oh, I am sorry you tell them to get the better of these fears. You will deprive us of a great deal of amusement. How I like to hear Elizabeth squall, when I bring a mouse from school, and throw it on her work ; and Cecilia squeal, when a little frog chances to hop upon her, as she is walking on the heath. And then Isabella, and all, run and cry, when at night I am letting off a few crackers, or making a little gunpowder blaze ; which you know would not hurt a fly.

ELIZABETH.

Samuel, that is very ill-natured.

MRS. ABNEY.

I would wish to persuade your sister, your cousin, and all your female friends, to become
objects

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objects of esteem, not of ridicule. But now, I must make my admonitions more general. Henry, Samuel, all of you, should cultivate both courage and resolution. Resolution is requisite for the performance of all your duties. Even to obey, you should possess this virtue.

HENRY.

Then I am sure we need not to take great pains about it. At school, nobody thinks about resolution; and yet we all obey. If we did not, we should feel *that man's* cruel cane.

MRS. ABNEY.

I suppose it is your master you speak of thus disrespectfully. Henry, you will observe there is a great difference in the manner of obeying, and of performing every duty. A boy who has resolution will rise, whether he be sleepy, or not,
the

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION. 335

the moment he hears the bell. He will apply diligently to his lessons, during the hours of study, and not indulge a wish to go to play. Whether hot or cold, thirsty or hungry, he will bear these inconveniences firmly, and not waste his breath in useless complaints. Should he be required to yield his seat to a younger scholar, because his place may be most convenient, he does it without a murmur, although he would have preferred to have staid where he was. When the hour for bed arrives, he is, perhaps, not inclined to sleep ; but he retires to rest cheerfully, because that is the hour appointed by his masters. Thus, with resolution, does a boy perform the duties of youth ; and as, each day, this disposition strengthens by exertion, he will, in a similar manner, be enabled to fulfil the more enlarged duties of manhood.

HENRY.

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HENRY.

I do not know what our different thoughts may be ; but I am sure we all equally obey.

MRS. ABNEY.

Mark the difference. Without resolution, a boy hears the morning bell ; he is sleepy ; he turns, therefore, round, and indulges another slumber. A second bell rings. At last, a third summons forces him to rise. He goes down yawning ; he receives a reproof from his master, which does not correct him—he scarcely hears it. Seated at his lessons, for a while he is asleep ; when he is roused, his thoughts turn to play ;—unaccustomed to restrain them, he cannot check their wandering. Thus unimproved do his hours for study pass. Deeming it impossible to endure hunger or thirst, his pockets are
always

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always stored with cakes and apples, to gratify his appetite. So, eating employs a large part of his time. Night being come, he thinks it very hard to go to bed, without being sleepy. Murmuring, he retires to his chamber; then devises some method of keeping awake for an hour or two, by contriving some play with the boys in the same room. His days thus unheeded fly, and leave no remembrance of one hour well improved. This disposition is confirmed by habit; therefore, in the same lifeless and useless manner, will he probably pass his life.

SAMUEL.

Henry, I am sure we know some boys like that idle one.

HENRY.

You should not, Samuel, tell tales out of school.

U u

SAMUEL.

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SAMUEL.

I do not tell tales.

MRS. ABNEY.

I wish not to make any particular inquiry. I only desire to set before you the good and the bad ; and to advise you to copy the one, while you avoid the other.

SAMUEL.

We will do that.

MRS. ABNEY.

No one has asked for a drawing to-day. I have brought you one ; but I do not mean to give it by favour. This time, it must be won.

HENRY.

And how?

MRS.

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION. 339

MRS. ABNEY.

I will tell you. It was a saying of Petrarch's, that the five greatest disturbers of the happiness of man, were avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride ; and that if men would consent to banish these, their peace would be almost uninterrupted. Now, each of you, exemplify this saying, by giving different examples ; and the one who succeeds best, has the drawing. Elizabeth, you will begin, by taking avarice.

ELIZABETH.

I am afraid if you confine me to avarice, I shall not be able to say any thing. But, if you please, I can read a story you once gave me, which will show the good effect of banishing all these evil dispositions.

U u 2

SAMUEL.

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SAMUEL.

Elizabeth is fond of general examples.

ELIZABETH.

I am quite willing to yield my turn of speaking, to any one, who will give us, then, an example of avarice alone.

MRS. ABNEY.

All are silent. Elizabeth, I believe you may begin.

(ELIZABETH, *reads.*)

A TALE.

A T A L E.

TERPANDER, a native of Antissa a city of the island of Lesbos, was famed for his skill on the Lyre. As he gently swept the sweetly sounding strings, he alternately assuaged, and raised in the mind, all the varying passions. When his voice accompanied his instrument, and he sang his well-composed verses, sometimes heroick, sometimes comick or tragick, no heart remained untouched by Terpander's tuneful art. As he was travelling through the eastern part of Asia, he chanced to stop at a populous town, at some distance from Susa. The vices and follies of the luxurious Persian capital extended even to this town. Here were seen ambition, profuseness, and all the long catalogue of human faults.

Terpander's skill in musick made him univer-
sally

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sally received in all companies. One day, as he was entertaining a numerous company with his well-toned Lyre, he sang, in nervous strains, the bad effect of avarice, and the fatal influence of wealth on the morals of men. Then did he draw, with inimitable pathos, the happy life of a peaceful husbandman, and the turbulent days of a wealthy citizen. He sang,

* * * * *

The direful cause, oh ! man, behold,
Whence spring the sorrows of thy breast :
'Tis the insatiate wish for gold,
That robs thy days and nights of rest.

And should thy eager hand obtain,
The idol treasure of thy heart,
How oft ! how oft ! it proves the bane,
To all that pity would impart.

If

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If hoarded up, like miser's store,
That more may still be join'd to more,
Not pity's soul-subduing voice,
Can change the wretch's sordid choice.

Another, glitt'ring wealth expends,
To purchase empty, dazzling joy ; —
This, now delight, now sorrow sends,
Which health and peace alike destroy.

Attend, ye youth, and say is this,
The sum you wish of human bliss ?
Or does not virtue fire your breast,
To live on earth more truly blest ?

To live, like him whose tranquil days,
Are pass'd in useful, rural arts ?
Whose varied pleasures merit praise,
Whose labour sweet—sweet joy imparts.

Turn from this blissful, pleasing sight,
To him whom foreign climes invite,

To

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To cross the boundless deep.
Behold him spend his life in toil,
Anxious to gain that earthly spoil,
Which long he cannot keep.

Such sweet musick accompanied the lay, that the harmonick argument was irresistible. All extolled the moving strains ;—but one old man was seen silently to leave the company. It was Severus ; whose time was divided between the accumulation of wealth, and the care of his idol treasures. Impressed with the tuneful persuasion of Terpander, he was retiring to his house, resolved to give up his troublesome hoard. He hastened to his secret apartment ; but when he beheld the bags of gold, his resolution failed ;—he gazed with rapture, then wept with delight, over his beloved possession.

The minstrel, willing to complete what he had begun, followed Severus to his house. He
now

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now sang in more lofty strains ; with more powerful energy ;

Oh, mortal ! cease that restless care,
Which sinks thy soul in deep despair,
And seek sublimer joys.
Thy bliss on earth, be peace and love ;
While hope enchanting points above,
And bids thy soul rejoice.

'Twas enough : Severus could no longer resist. His bags of ore were thrown into the river, and he resolved to betake himself to agriculture.

Terpander now sensible of his power, determined to avail himself of his influence ; and to return this people's hospitality, by correcting them of their predominant faults.

It was on Medoro he next tried his powerful art. This man was, by birth, in the lowest order of mechanicks. His talents, at first, raised him ; and by his insatiable ambition, he was

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elevated

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elevated to a high employment in the city. Still there was something higher to be attained ; and that something he must arrive at. The object of his aim was ever in his eye ; and the desire to obtain it always in his mind. In the mean time he was racked by anxiety and by the torture of never-ceasing and ungoverned wishes. So great was his desire to grasp at this high rank, to which his wishes pointed, that the means to attain it, he quite disregarded ;—whether they were legal, or equitable, he stopped not to inquire.—When Terpander, in his presence, tuned his lyre, 'twas first to comick strains. He sang ; and singing, ridiculed the toys and baubles which earthly folly aims at. Beginning at childhood, rattles, tops, and ropes were first his themes ;—then in youth—eagerness in the chace, the race, the fight. Vigour is quickly passed ; and not one conquest gained.

—But

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—But manhood now succeeds. Toys of larger size become man's aim. Perhaps a star and garter ; a house of larger size than cards once built, but full as soon destroyed. One luckless spark may level it with the ground. That bubble, a great man's favour, may be his wish ; but that is soon blown through.

Thus blooming life fast glides away,
And folly holds her ample sway,
Through all thy gay career.
Oh, Mortal ! read thy native heart :
Can mem'ry inward joy impart,
When gloom and age appear ?

The minstrel changed the strain. Tragick sounds now strike the ear. Youth and riper years thus passed, what can remain ?—A blank, a vacant mind. Incapable of active toil, the old man sits ; —his eye-sight gone, his strength de-

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cayed ;

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cayed ; murmuring, he sits, by the side of his fire ; with no inward, pleasing resource, no sublime hope, pointing to eternity, and promising a renewal of joys perpetual, ever fair. The evening of life is passed in complaints. No kind friend near, to cheer it's close, or heave one sympathetick sigh over this selfish mortal's grave. He dies unmourned and unlamented.

Ye busy crowd, attend the solemn pause.
The awful tomb has oped it's wide-mouth'd jaws.
That form, whose mind could never boast of worth,
Is sunk, alas ! beneath it's parent earth.
His former frailties, and his mis'ry view ;
And thou, oh man ! a brighter course pursue.

Terpander ceased. With tears was every eye bedewed. But Medoro's soul was most powerfully touched. He proved the force of the minstrel's art. It had cooled the intemperate wishes
of

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of his mind, and to nobler cares had turned his thoughts. The good Terpander felt a large reward in this success. He next addressed his magick notes to Envy. It was in an assembly of young men, whose manners and dress scarcely showed distinction of sex ; and of fair-ones, painted, dressed, perfumed, in all the luxury of Persian custom. In this assembly of folly, Terpander marked the malicious smile, and the envious frown, when a modest, unadorned, yet more lovely Maid appeared. He saw ; and sang the follies that he saw ; — a group of ugly forms, all masked with paint, with falsehood, and with frightful affectation ; more cruel far than vultures. They but tear the carcase when mortal life is gone ; these tear the living soul. So horrid was the tuneful picture, that a hideous scream arose.

Envy,

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Envy, be gone, thou cank'ring worm ;
Not longer use thy utmost skill ;
To blacken virtue's fairest form,
With venom, and corroding ill.

Quick the minstrel changed the strain. It
was a sweetly lyrick sound now swept the silver
wire. He sang ; and praised the modest Fair,
whom Envy, and her haggard train disowned ;—
the humble maid, who made the housewife's use-
ful art her care, and passed her days in duty's
path, and simple joys :

Oh ! thou in native charms array'd,
Lovely, blooming, gentle maid !
Thy virtues strike the dulcet sound ;
While Zephyr wafts thy praise around.
Let modest worth, unrivall'd fair,
In duty's path be still thy care.

Pleasing, enchanting, was the song. Each
face

ELEVENTH CONVERSATION. 351

face was graced with gentle smiles ; and lovely virtue touched each heart.—The maidens now dispersed ; and home they went, resolved to follow straight the paths which duty marked. The young men too, transformed by musick's power, quitted their trifling pleasures, and turned their thoughts to manly, and to worthy cares.

Now fierce anger struck Terpander's sight ; a youth—Emilius was his name—in rage and fury. It was passion, the madness of an hour, that hurried him along. With force Terpander struck his lyre ; and thus prolonged the hateful rage, in stronger tint to show it all around.

See storming rage, terrifick foe,

In hateful form appears.

What dreadful wrath, what sounds of woe,

He thunders in our ears !

That done, to meek-eyed Peace he tuned his
voice. Come,

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Come, gentle Peace. Let all rejoice.
Oh! send thy sweet melodious voice.
Shed thy influence o'er the soul;
And ev'ry wayward wish control.
Thou, heav'n-born maid! 'Tis thou alone,
Canst bless a cottage, or a throne.

Emilius's passion cooled. Within him now was peace;—'twas pleasure all. He wondered at himself, thus to have been betrayed to madness and to folly. Far hence, he cried, be gone, bold rage, mad passion. And thanks unnumbered let me give to you, sweet bard. Terpander, pleased, now sang a cheerful ode of joy, and ceased.

Pride disgusting next he touched. Strong were now his numbers. At a rich man's gate he sang; a man elated by his pride, his pomp, his power. In lofty measures did he sing;—of haughty folly was his verse;—then of the piercing

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ing thorn which pricks the proud man's heart,
when conscious virtue will not move to make
him way.

Oh ! Pride, thou tyrant, foe to rest,
Tormentor of the human breast,
At thy approach all pleasure flies ;
And playful mirth before thee dies.
Thy swelling voice, with lofty sound,
Proclaims thy vaunted honours round ;
And wretched man, to pomp a prey,
Submits to thy imperious sway.

The proud man, enraged by the boldness of
the minstrel, sallied forth. Terpander still con-
tinued. He heeded not his pride, nor yet his
rage. The offended lord now stopped to frown ;
and musick's power just touched his soul.—Ter-
pander struck with bolder hand. The sound
vibrated through the rich man's heart.—'Tis
Orpheus, 'tis Apollo, he exclaimed. No mortal

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hand

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hand ever touched a lyre so well.—Lyrick strains did now succeed; and lessons of humility Terpander gave, with his sweet minstrelsy. In numbers soft he sang. Pride he chased; and humble, gentle peace he brought, in haughty passion's place.—The wealthy Lord now changed, acknowledged what he before would not have said; that he had been enslaved by pride. But, moved by heavenly art, he now was humble, and continued happy.—Terpander, quite delighted, sang a hymn of thanks: then, striking full chords, concluded with a lofty pæan.

This being done, he proceeded on his journey. These great examples, which Musick's divine power had made, extended their influence to the city. And the people, once so luxurious and so vicious, having no longer avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride, amongst them, came both virtuous and happy. Each

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gleam of folly was seen, a skilful minstrel played the lyre. Musick was ever revered in this city ; and each returning year its inhabitants devoted a day to sing the praises of the good Terpander.

CECILIA.

And indeed he well deserved this honour.

SAMUEL.

I hope you will forgive me, Elizabeth. The story is really pretty ; and I acknowledge your choice is good.

HENRY.

I am sure Elizabeth will get the drawing ; and I am glad of it.

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MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. Elizabeth does get it. But, what will you say, when you hear it is only an Owl?

SAMUEL.

Oh, that is the bird of wisdom. So, we will call her Minerva.

MRS. ABNEY.

Very well. Receive, then, Minerva's bird. And as you like poetry, you may borrow the lines of the pleasing poet I have before quoted to you, and write them under it.

“ Now the hermit Howlet peeps
“ From the barn, or twisted brake ;
“ And the blue mist slowly creeps,
“ Curling on the silver lake.”

As



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As 'it is a moon-light, and there is water in the scene, the lines are well suited. Having now fulfilled my office, adjudged, and given my prize, I must take my leave. In a few weeks this year will end. As we met together at the beginning, I will endeavour likewise to be with you at its close. In the mean time, farewell.



TWELFTH.

TWELFTH CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH, CECILIA, ISABELLA, MARIAN, HENRY,
AND SAMUEL.

Seated in a circle round the fire.

CECILIA.

I WILL willingly join you in any play, provided
it be a merry one.

SAMUEL.

Ah, let it be a merry one. 'Tis the last day
of the year ; and we must not let our old friend
depart with gloom.

ELIZA-

360 TWELFTH CONVERSATION.

ELIZABETH.

Tell us, then, what will excite your mirth.
What say you to the play of proverbs?

HENRY.

Oh, I hate old fashioned proverbs.

ELIZABETH.

Let us hear, then, what will please you better.

ISABELLA.

Henry's delight is in skipping about: so I suppose he would vote for introducing puss in the corner, or hunt my lady's slipper.

HENRY.

No, no. We will leave those amusements for the babes in the nursery.

ELIZA- /

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 361

ELIZABETH.

Suppose, then, we have our old favourite play of forfeits.

CECILIA.

Yes. We shall all like that.

ELIZABETH.

Well, then, the subject shall be Achilles's Shield. I will, as usual, give out the lines ; and each one must repeat my words, or forfeit. We have, most of us, read Homer's Iliad : but for the information of some of our party who have not, I will tell you what ancient fable says. Achilles was one of the Grecian chiefs who went to the Trojan war ; and he was supposed to be the bravest of all the Greeks. He was the son of Thetis and Peleus. When an infant, his mother dipped him in the waters of the Styx ;

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which

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which rendered him invulnerable in every part, except the heel, by which she held him. Afterwards, when he went to the Trojan war, to guard him still more from danger, she prevailed with Vulcan to make him a suit of armour; and the lines I am going to repeat, contain a description of the surface of the shield which Vulcan made.

CECILIA.

But, Elizabeth, I think the invulnerable hero wanted not a shield.

ELIZABETH.

So I should have thought. But I suppose a mother's anxiety made Thetis think otherwise; for Homer says, she petitioned Vulcan for the armour to shield her son from danger.

You all, now, agree to enter into the lists of competition for a good memory. So I will begin. Attend.—Take this.

CECI-

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 363

CECILIA.

What is this ?

ELIZABETH.

Achilles's Shield.

With various works was graced the field,
Of famed Achilles' blazing shield ; —
The shining orbs, the azure sky ;
The Sun, the Moon, the Earth on high ;
The circle by the zodiack bound,
The starry lights in order round ;
The town besieg'd ; the num'rous train
Of captains, chiefs, and heroes slain ;
The ambush laid ; the combat fierce,
Where spears the trembling shepherds pierce.

CECILIA.

Oh, I forfeit.

ISABELLA.

And I.

Z Z 2

MARI-

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MARIAN.

And so do I.

HENRY.

And I am sure I must forfeit.

SAMUEL.

So must I.

ELIZABETH.

I collect the forfeits. Here are five. Now we will go on.—Take this.

CECILIA.

What is this?

ELIZABETH.

Achilles's Shield.

With various works was graced the field,
Of famed Achilles' blazing shield;—

The

TWELFTH CONVERSATION: 365

The shining orbs, the azure sky ;
The Sun, the Moon, the Earth on high ;
The circle by the zodiack bound,
The starry lights in order round ;
The town besieg'd ; the num'rous train
Of captains, chiefs, and heroes slain ;
The ambush laid ; the combat fierce,
Where spears the trembling shepherds pierce.
The fleecy flock, and lowing herd,
On the wide fertile plain appear'd.
Amidst its prey, the lion roar'd,
The hungry monarch of the wood,
The wealthy town, the days of peace ;
The harvest blest, when labours cease ;
The sprightly dance, the sweet toned lute,
The cymbal, and melodious flute.
Around the whole, the warriour's pride,
The Ocean rolls its silver tide.

CECILIA.

I cannot boast a retentive memory. So here
is my forfeit.

ISA-

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ISABELLA.

And here, take mine.

MARIAN.

And mine.

HENRY.

And mine too.

SAMUEL.

It is with sorrow I give mine. But here it is. I wish I could have remembered the lines. Were all the various things described in them, engraved on the shield? or were they represented in embossed work?

ELIZABETH.

They were, I believe, engraved; and each subject in a separate compartment. Now, for
the

. TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 367

the forfeits. How, Cecilia, shall the owner of this, regain his forfeit?

CECILIA.

How?—By repeating four lines in rhyme, extempore.

Enter MRS. ABNEY.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am come, to day, to bid farewell with you to the parting year. I hope you are all more good, and more improved then you were twelve months ago; and I likewise hope that none of you have found; our conversations tiresome or tedious, as Henry seemed to prognosticate they would be.

HENRY.

Do not remind me of that. I have been quite happy and satisfied, since. I am willing to hear
as

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as much more good advice, if you will promise me as many more entertaining stories.

MRS. ABNEY.

If I were to make such a promise, it would be with some previous conditions. And here should be one ; that you would not only listen to my advice, but remember, and follow it.

HENRY.

I will promise all you please.

CECILIA.

It seems to me but as yesterday, when we met on New-year's day ; and yet twelve months are passed : how dismal it is to reflect on the rapid flight of time.

MRS.

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 369

MRS. ABNEY.

Ah! Cecilia, I am sorry to hear you say that. I flattered myself you had learned to think more justly. Can it be dismal for a Christian to reflect that days fly swiftly, when he knows that each instant brings him nearer to that eternity he was created to enjoy? if you properly use time, you have reason to rejoice with the close of each day; and you may then say, "another day of trial is passed, and leaves me a hope that my God will indulgently accept the efforts I have this day made to please him."

CECILIA.

I see I am wrong; yet I feel that I cannot think, without fear, of appearing before an Almighty judge.

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MRS. ABNEY.

It is a right and a natural fear, for what mortal can think, without trembling, of his heart being inspected by the eyes of purity itself? if you contemplate death, however in the light of Christianity, its darkest terrors will be dispelled. Be active in the performance of every duty, always remembering that you are probationers for eternity. And whilst mixing with a busy world, let your hearts and hopes soar above its cares and its follies. The close of this mortal scene will then approach, to each of you, with peace and joy.—Think not these grave reflections intended to destroy, or damp the ardour of your youthful spirits. My desire is to point out to you the only source from which they can flow without alloy.

Henry, you are thinking our conversation too
serious.

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serious. Are you not? we will change it for what may please you; a story. I have also brought you a song, which I think you will like. But before I give it you, I must tell you how useful it has already been.

CECILIA.

Is there musick to it?

MRS. ABNEY.

Yes. Pretty musick; composed by one whom you all know, Mr. Webbe; whose taste and merit as a composer, are universally acknowledged.

The hero and the heroines of my tale are living. That circumstance may make it more interesting. But I can only tell you their christian names; for when we mention faults, we should not make publick the persons.

3 A 2

A TALE.

A T A L E.

SOPHIA and Anna are sisters. They have one brother, Henry. These young people have been brought up by parents so indulgent, that their inclinations were never curbed. They were all early sent to school. From the fear of wearying them, they had little previous instruction ; so these wayward children were ill prepared to receive improvement from their school instructors. Learning to read was, with them, a long task ; so great was their obstinacy and self will. That being ended, Sophia and Anna would not apply to any branch of learning which they possibly could avoid. Henry was forced to study more closely ;—He was intended for a learned profession. But idleness and vanity were still
strongly

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strongly predominant in his mind.—The only use Sophia and Anna made of the little learning they had acquired, which was merely an imperfect knowledge of reading, was to peruse all the ridiculous novels which they, by stealth, could get from the circulating libraries in the neighbourhood. This frivolous reading confirmed them in what was wrong. They were convinced, because one of their favourite heroines was the object of universal admiration, that to be admired was a woman's glory and happiness; therefore all their thoughts and all their cares were turned to this one single aim; and beauty and dress were the only distinctions which they could fancy of any importance. Such being their taste for trifles, at school they had only for their companions the most trifling of the scholars; and when they assembled at home, they were no better off. For what good parents would

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would suffer their children to associate with so much folly?—Henry was little better than his sisters. A coat, if the colour only did not please him, would put him in a rage. His mother had chanced to choose for him a peach coloured suit; this was not the *ton*; so Henry stamped about the room, declaring he would not go out, to be pointed at by the boys in the street. So ungoverned were his passions, that this was his usual behaviour when any little thing disconcerted him. He was in vain told that his coat would never distinguish him; that he would neither be esteemed, nor despised for that; for children generally pass unnoticed, except by their parents and nearest friends, unless they are remarkable for goodness and great docility.

Henry, however, grew older, his mind strengthened, and he got the better of this silly vanity,
the

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 375

the characteristick of a little mind. He went to the university; and there pursued study with assiduity. This employed, and gave a better turn to his thoughts; and he now promises to be a worthy character. Sophia and Anna remained triflers longer. With their years, their love of dress increased. Paint, washes, to embellish, as they thought, their hair and their skin, but which in reality were destructive to both, they added to a great deal of finery, and frivolity of dress. This conduct made them despised or pitied by all who thought justly. Still they found many to agree with them in folly; for female education is generally so ill conducted, that we see, all around, female triflers without number. Amongst their acquaintance, they found one young woman possessed of more benevolence than common. She saw, pitied, and strove to remonstrate with them on their folly.

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folly. But so averse were they to enter into any reasonable conversation, that she found the task she had undertaken, a most difficult enterprise.

She was, however, indefatigable;—and one morning, having called upon them, she introduced a conversation on dress.—I can see no reason said Anna for despising dress. Here you want to make us old, before we are eighteen.—No, said her friend. Believe me, a modest simple attire, will not add to your years; neither will finery stop, one moment, the course of time.—Now, said Sophia you are really making such a serious matter of just ~~wearing~~ wearing a pretty cap, or a gay gown, as if there ~~could~~ be any harm in doing so.—What do you propose to yourself, replied her friend Emilia, by the numberless ornaments you put on?—Propose? To amuse and please myself, replied Anna.—That, said Emilia

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Emilia, is one of the most innocent motives you can have ; but rest assured that unless you check this immoderate fondness for dress, you will not stop at desiring to please yourself. No, if indulged, it may, later, ruin your reputation, your fortune ; and even endanger your eternal happiness.—I declare, said Sophia, you almost frighten me ; yet I cannot conceive what crime there can be, in preferring a pretty poppy, to a dismal black, or brown riband ?—No crime, I acknowledge, in that simple preference. It is the unbounded love of finery and variety that becomes criminal. And I advise you early to control your inclinations ; for if you give the rein to your passions in one instance, you may find it very difficult to bridle them in any.—Oh, cried Anna, let us dress as we like for a few years. When we grow old we must leave off.—Nay, said Emilia. Inclinations may strengthen,

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instead of abating with years. If now you persist in loving dress thus immoderately, perhaps you will not leave off the practice of dressing gaily, though your face should be wrinkled, or your limbs tottering with age. Then think how ridiculous you will appear.—I acknowledge, said Sophia, I should not like to be an object of ridicule in old age.—Hasten, then, replied Emilia, to change your conduct, for ridicule will otherwise, perhaps, be the least evil you will have to regret; you may become an object of detestation. No one yet ever indulged extravagance, without injuring many with whom they were connected. What numbers, from the love of dress, run in debt, leaving poor families almost starving, who have supplied them with articles for the gratification of their vanity; and have probably bestowed their labour in making the finery they are fluttering about in; and these
poor

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 379

poor creatures perhaps in the mean time, are penniless, not knowing where to get a morsel of bread to satisfy their hunger.—Now, said Anna, how grave my sister is. I know she is frightened ; and we shall soon see her in a dirty camlet gown, and a mob cap. That is what you wish. Is it not Emilia ?—No. Far be it from me, to wish to see either of you dirty. I would persuade you only to dress with neatness, with modesty, with simplicity. That is my desire. And, believe me, you will secure esteem, and much more distinction even, by that manner ; for it is a prevailing fashion to love dress ; and if you follow that prevalent fashion, you may pass unnoticed ; but by adopting an opposite conduct, you will gain esteem, and be distinguished for doing right.—Emilia now took her leave. She left Anna confirmed in her own mode of thinking : but was pleased to see that

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Sophia was half a convert.—She soon visited them again ; and brought a song, which she desired Sophia to play and sing. She obeyed ; was pleased with the air ; then read the words.—Tell me said Sophia, what are these lasting charms ? point them out to me. I promise to be your obedient pupil, and to acquire them, if I can. Ah ! said Emilia, acquire them, you most easily can. And delighted shall I be, if I can assist you. I promise you my best endeavours to do it.—Emilia was most assiduous in the performance of this promise.

She taught her friend to be reasonable, to be discreet ; to love truth, sincerity, mildness, generosity, and every virtue. Having attained these valuable dispositions, she despised *love* of dress ; though in her person she is always neat, plain, and even elegant.—Anna now flutters at every dance ; is flattered ; is pleasing and pleased for
an

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 381

an hour, but soon forgotten. Her beauty is already fading, from the use of paint, and from late hours ; and though still young, it is often said, “ she once was pretty.” Sophia is admired, esteemed, loved by all her friends. Every one anxiously wishes that her life may be long. But it is sure that even after death her goodness will be recollected ; and her remembrance long live in the hearts of many.

Such are two young women with whom I am acquainted. I need not ask you, which you would wish to resemble.

ELIZABETH.

Oh, how I should like to be the virtuous Emilia, who did so much good in reclaiming her friend !

MRS.,

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MRS. ABNEY.

Emilia is an example that it is not by money alone that you can be useful. Good counsel is sometimes more beneficial than gold.

ISABELLA.

I am glad to hear it; for I should like to be useful in the world; and yet I have very little money.

MRS. ABNEY.

Learn then to be good; to think with accuracy and justness; and then you may often have an opportunity of being serviceable.

ISABELLA.

I can hardly imagine how Anna, with all Emilia's endeavours, could have remained so blind to what was right.

MRS.

TWELFTH CONVERSATION. 383

MRS. ABNEY.

It is difficult to overcome long established habits ; that makes it so desirable for youth to form only good ones. Anna, from infancy, has been practising folly ; and she knows not how to give it up.

But I am detaining Samuel and Henry I fear, from some pleasant skating party.

SAMUEL.

I hope we shall have a little skating this fine day ; but pray do not send us away till you have given the drawing.

MRS. ABNEY.

I am unwilling to detain you longer from your amusement ; I have therefore, a great mind to give my drawing, without waiting to compare merit. Do you agree to that, for once ?

ELIZA-

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ELIZABETH.

Oh, yes. If you please.

MRS. ABNEY.

And I am much inclined to give it to Isabella ;
who, I think, has not yet had one.

ISABELLA.

No. I have not. And I shall thank you very
much.

MRS. ABNEY.

Take, then, this pretty Redbreast ; and tell
Samuel and Henry to look at it ; and to be
merciful to such little warblers ; which at this
comfortless season are continually flying to the
house for protection and for food.

Now, Cecilia, to you I give the song ; but
with



N^o 12.

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with this condition ; that Elizabeth has the privilege of playing it.

(SAMUEL, HENRY *and* MARIAN.)

Then we have no share.

MRS. ABNEY.

You have all had your turn ; so you must not complain. Now let us go to the river, and see the skating. Come, my dears, all.

F I N I S.

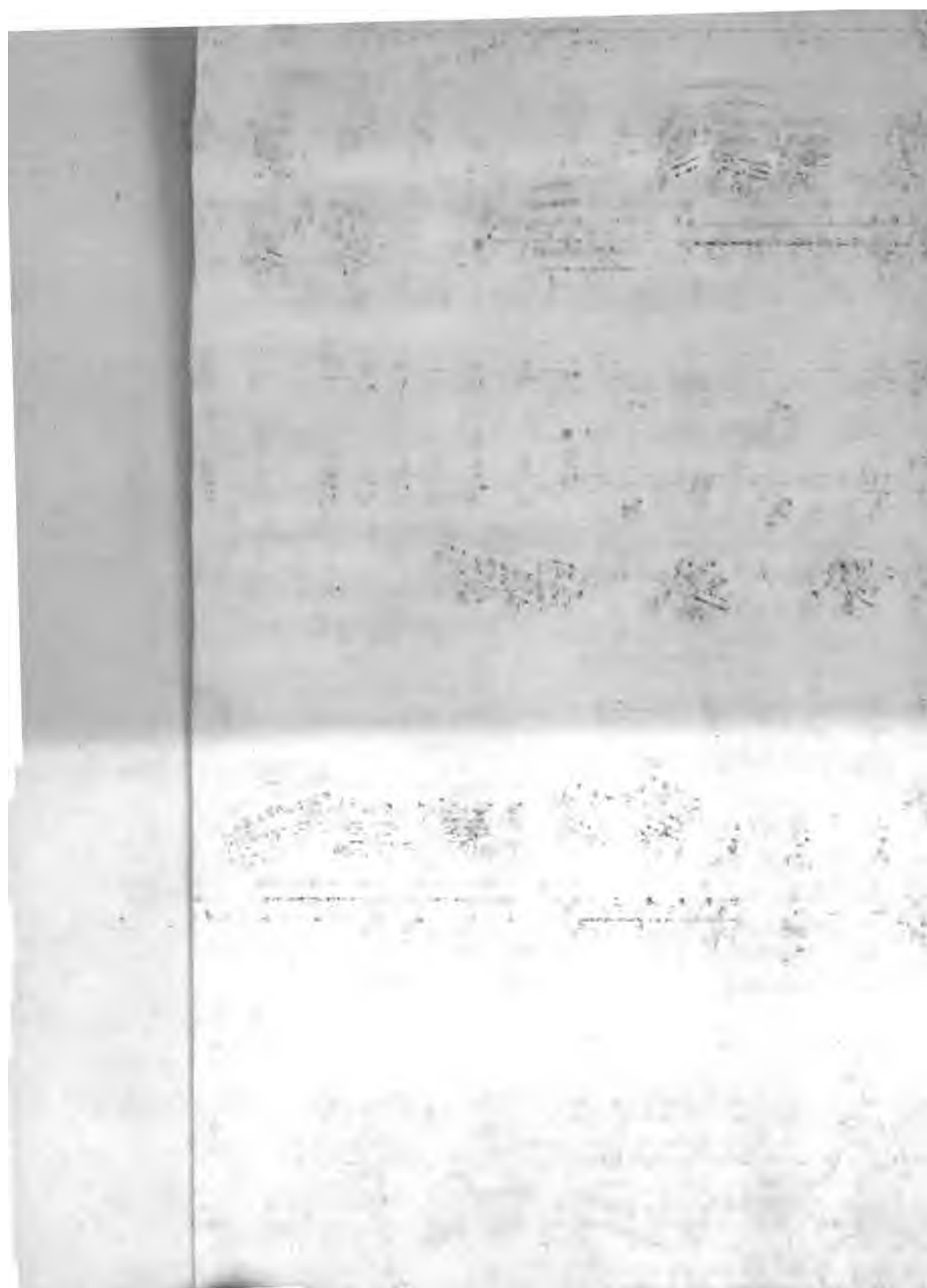
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